KILLING TIME
The terrifying *Resurrection Man*

RAGING GLORY
Bob Dylan's amazing revival

SUPERBAD!
Blaxploitation special

UNCUT

music & movies

MARCH 1998 £2.75

The last days of SID VICIOUS

NORTH COUNTRY NOISE
Tim Burgess on The Charlatans

STREET FIGHTING MEN
Godard, the Stones and *One Plus One*

URBAN SPACEMEN
The Verve's first flight

KING OF NEW YORK
Matthew Modine and Schooly D on Abel Ferrara

CARPENTERS NEWS
UNCUT MU
GG 7 16/04 F
W21 98 $ 7.50

9 771368 072015 03>

UNCUT TAKE 10> Sid Vicious • Resurrection Man • Bob Dylan • Blaxploitation • The Charlatans • One Plus One • The Verve • Abel Ferrara • Spiritualized • Tarantino • Pearl Jam • Jack Nicholson • Kristin Hersh • Ian Softley • Clare Grogan • Liv Tyler • Amistad

MARCH 1998

AMERICA'S MOST IMPORTANT CRITICS ARE SPREADING THE GOOD WILL!

Joe Morgenstern - THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"Astonishing and Thrilling Entertainment"

David Ansen - NEWSWEEK

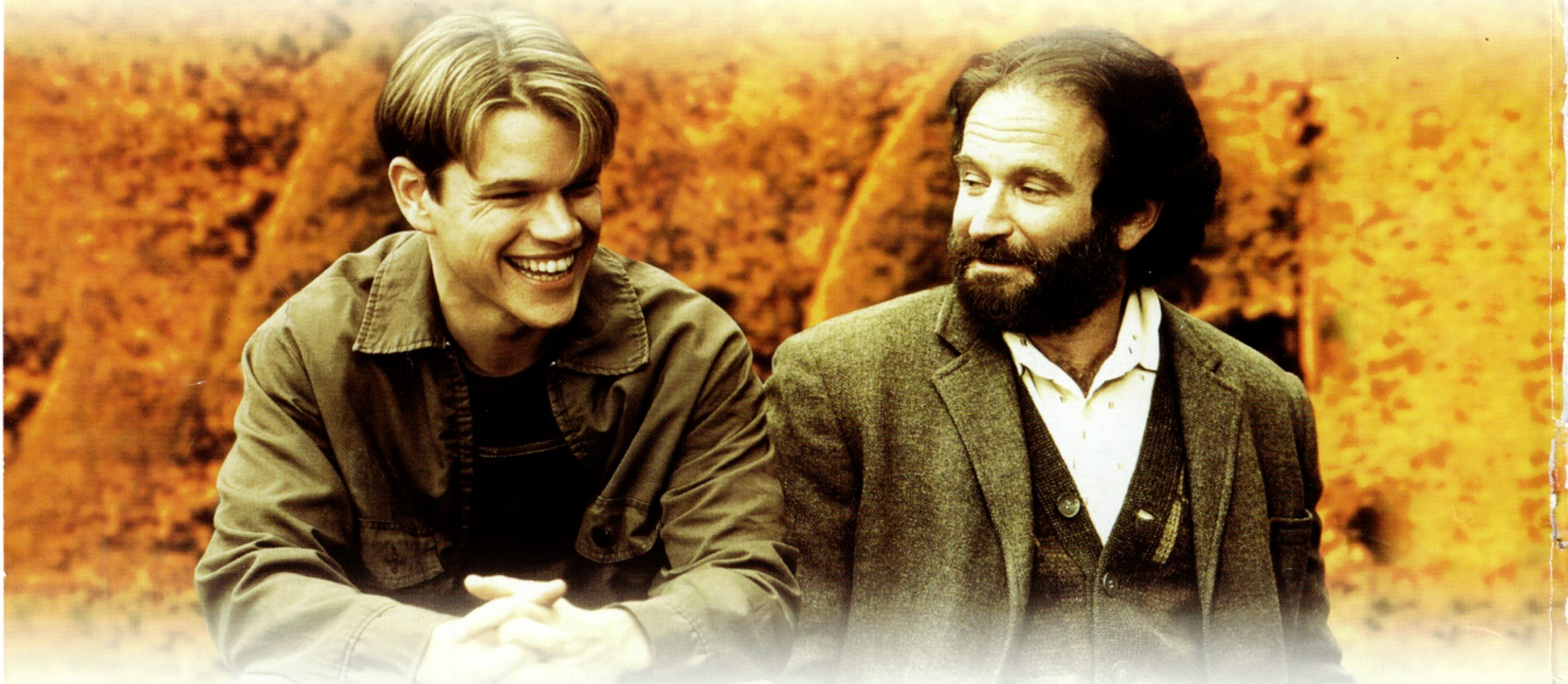
"Rich, Funny and Filled with Emotional Truth"

Janet Maslin - THE NEW YORK TIMES

"A Smart and Touching Screenplay,
Directed with Style, Shrewdness and Clarity, Fine Acting and a Very Warm Heart"

Mike Clark - USA TODAY

"Matt Damon Delivers the Year's No.1 Breakthrough Performance"



ROBIN WILLIAMS MATT DAMON

GOOD WILL HUNTING

BEN AFFLECK MINNIE DRIVER STELLAN SKARSGÅRD

THE NEW FILM BY GUS VAN SANT

MIRAMAX INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS A LAWRENCE BENDER PRODUCTION A FILM BY GUS VAN SANT ROBIN WILLIAMS MATT DAMON "GOOD WILL HUNTING" BEN AFFLECK STELLAN SKARSGÅRD AND MINNIE DRIVER
CASTING BY BILLY HOPKINS SUZANNE SMITH KERRY BARDEN COSTUME DESIGNER BEATRIX ARUNA PASZTOR MUSIC SUPERVISOR JEFFREY KIMBALL MUSIC BY DANNY ELFMAN EDITOR PIETRO SCALIA PRODUCTION DESIGNER MELISSA STEWART
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JEAN YVES ESCOFFIER CO-PRODUCED BY CHRIS MOORE CHARACTERS PRODUCED BY KEVIN SMITH SCOTT MOSIER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BOB WEINSTEIN HARVEY WEINSTEIN JONATHAN GORDON DIRECTOR PRODUCER SU ARMSTRONG
PRODUCED BY LAWRENCE BENDER WRITTEN BY BEN AFFLECK & MATT DAMON DIRECTED BY GUS VAN SANT

LB lawrence bender productions

DOLBY DIGITAL

©1997 MIRAMAX FILM CORP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

www.miramax.com

DISTRIBUTED BY BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL (UK) LTD.

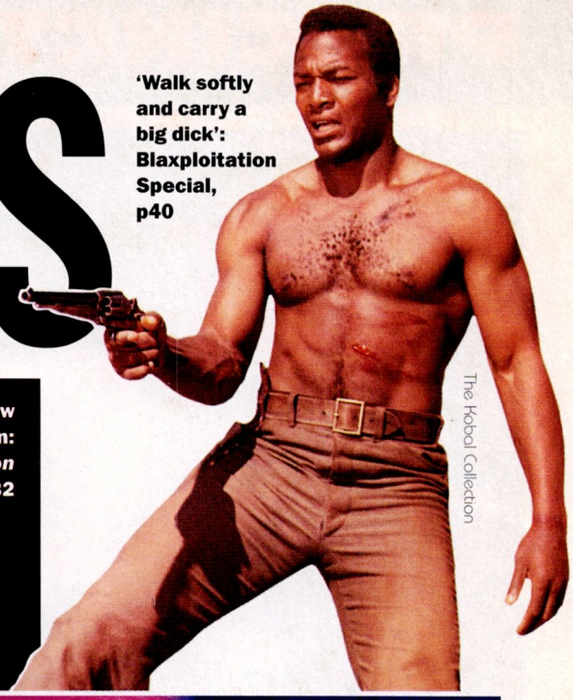
READ THE SCREENPLAY AVAILABLE FROM

MIRAMAX INTERNATIONAL

Soundtrack available on soundtracks featuring music from Luscious Jackson, Al Green, the Dandy Warholds, Gerry Rafferty, Elliott Smith and more...

AT CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY MARCH 6

CONTENTS



'Walk softly and carry a big dick': Blaxploitation Special, p40

The Kobal Collection

PRECINCT 13 Music and movie news p4

KRISTIN HERSH Q&A p21

SPIRITUALIZED Jason Pierce's consuming passions p22

BOB DYLAN Legendary American rock writer Paul Williams on Dylan's amazing LA shows p24

IAIN SOFTLEY Oh, for the wings of a dove p31

RESURRECTION MAN The most violent and disturbing British film of the Nineties p32

REEL MUSIC 2 Full details of this month's fantastic free CD p38

BLAXPLOITATION SPECIAL The movies, soundtracks and icons. *Baaaad!!* p40

THE CHARLATANS Tim Burgess on the band's traumatic career p46

WOLFGANG PETERSEN The director of *Das Boot* comes up for air p50

THE VERVE In the beginning p52

THE FULL MONTY Hugo Speer lets it all hang out p56

SID VICIOUS The full sordid story of his final days p58

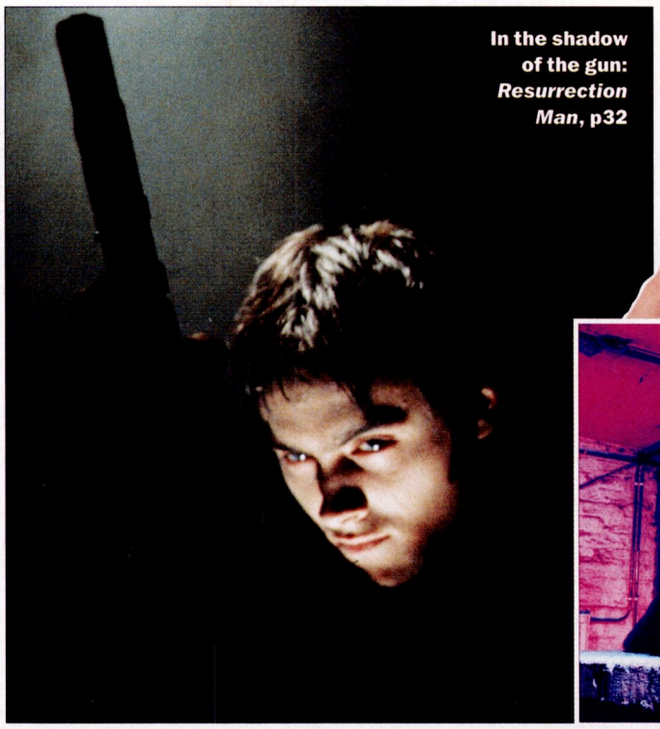
CLARE GROGAN From Altered Images to *EastEnders* p68

ABEL FERRARA'S BLACKOUT Matthew Modine and Schooly D on the King of New York p70

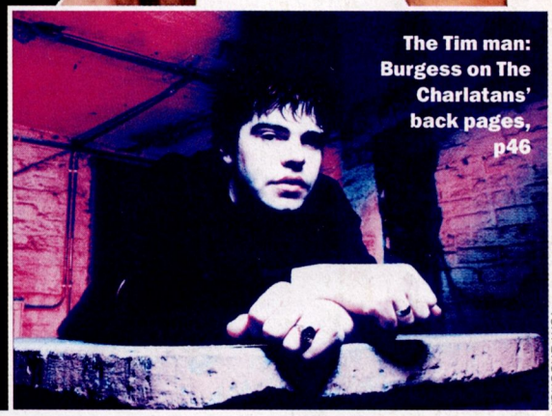
COMPETITIONS Win *Beautiful Girls* and *Grosse Pointe Blank* videos p114

HI-FIDELITY Video projectors p120

STOP ME . . . Wayne Nutt, the singing oil man p122

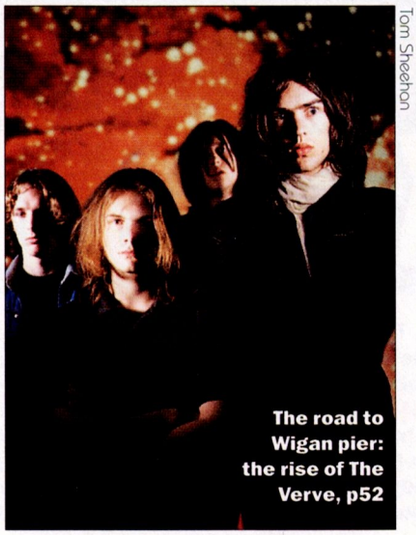


In the shadow of the gun: *Resurrection Man*, p32



The Tim man: Burgess on The Charlatans' back pages, p46

Tom Sheehan



The road to Wigan pier: the rise of The Verve, p52

Tom Sheehan

REVIEWS

MUSIC **Pearl Jam** in stupendous form with the defiant *Yield* . . . new albums from **Goldie, Nick Lowe, Air, Nick Heyward . . . Godley & Creme** revisited

MOVIES **Spielberg's Amistad, Ferrara's The Blackout, Ang Lee's The Ice Storm, Alec Baldwin** and **Anthony Hopkins** in **The Edge, Kurt Russell** in **Breakdown**

BOOKS **Julie Burchill's *I Knew I Was Right*,** the making of ***The Fifth Element*, Carl Hiassen's *Lucky You*,** new biographies of **Miles Davis** and **Jimi Hendrix . . . *Reviews begin on p75***

Shot by both sides: Abel Ferrara's *The Blackout*, p70

The Kobal Collection

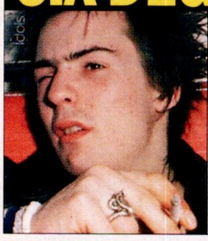
JUMPING JACK FLASHBACK

Redferns

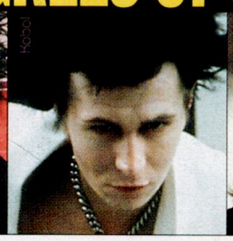
IF it worked for **THE BEATLES**, it should work for **THE ROLLING STONES**. That's the BBC's thinking, having unearthed around 20 rare radio recordings from the early Sixties. The Beeb is in talks with former Stones manager Allen Klein and the group's old record label, Decca, with a view to releasing an album of the material, which dates from October, 1963 to August, 1965. The recordings include the group's very first BBC radio session, during which they also doubled as **BO DIDDLEY**'s backing band. "We will be guided by Allen Klein and the group themselves," said John Willan, director of BBC Worldwide Music, the corporation's commercial release division. "The BBC own the copyright to the recordings, but it is not clear who owns the copyright to the performances." The Stones, currently on tour in the US, have still to hear the recordings again, and a spokesman for the band said they were looking forward to giving them another airing. A double CD of early Beatles radio recordings, *Live At The BBC*, sold more than four million copies when it was released in 1994.

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

Once again we wend our way between the worlds of music and movies in half a dozen simple steps. This month . . . **SID VICIOUS** to **PAM GRIER**



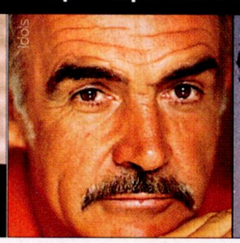
SID VICIOUS . . .



was portrayed in the movie *Sid And Nancy* by **GARY OLDMAN** . . .

who was once married to **UMA THURMAN** . . .

who starred in *Mad Dog And Glory* with **ROBERT DE NIRO** . . .



who starred in *The Untouchables* with **SEAN CONNERY** . . .

whose Bond film, *Thunderball*, featured a theme song by **TOM JONES** . . .

who appeared in *Mars Attacks!* with **PAM GRIER**!

Pics: Michael / Idols

TYLER MADE

WELL, what would your reaction be on finding out that the man you'd been calling Daddy wasn't your real father, and the guy who'd taught you to belch was?

LIV TYLER's discovery of her true parentage is just one of many soapesque scenes in *Walk This Way*, the absorbing **AEROSMITH** autobiography published this month. Tyler spent many years under the impression that **TODD RUNDGREN** was pops and Aerosmith crooner **STEVEN TYLER** was just a family friend. Mum **BEBE BUELL** *(pictured above with daughter)*, recalls the day when Liv, watching the band at a 1988 concert, suddenly bellowed "That's my *father*, isn't it?" Steven Tyler's response to the truth coming out was a brief "Holy shit!"

Walk This Way was written by the band in tandem with Stephen Davis, author of the notorious Led Zeppelin tome, *Hammer Of The Gods*.

See review on page 117

BREAKING WIND

BRITPOP is dead. Long live . . . the euphonium? **ALEX JAMES**, bass player with **BLUR**, has just taken delivery of the 3,500 pounds sterling brass instrument, more usually associated with German oom-pah-pah bands. "It's a beautiful thing," he says. "The only problem is you can't smoke while you're playing it."

James revealed that during Blur's 1997 world tour, band members passed idle moments learning a range of new instruments – flute, clarinet, saxophone and trumpet among others.

"We had this massive dressing-room brass ensemble. It was quite a racket, a very freeform jazz noise. Someone would start playing something stupid like the *Match Of The Day* theme and we would all join in. We tried to get Damon to play kettle drums but he wouldn't."

He added that Blur will not be touring in the foreseeable future. "We've toured more than any other band this decade, since 1989, in fact. You get bored with it, which is why I'm writing a musical. Once you've lost your fear of an orchestra then you can start doing things like that."

The as-yet-untitled work boasts some heavyweight theatrical collaborators. While James takes care of the music, the libretto is by award-winning playwright Jez Butterworth, and the show will be produced by Sam Mendes of the Donmar Warehouse. "There will be lots of dancing girls," promises James. "I can't wait."

Blur, meanwhile, are planning a film score in conjunction with The Dust Brothers, and will pursue other adventures on their new instruments.

"You join a band because you want to make a lot of noise," says James. " It'd be great to tour with us all on different instruments, but I'm not sure anyone would pay to see me play the euphonium on stage. It's not very rock'n'roll."

James: sonic euphonium

Shandling (right): no flipping!

HANKS FOR THE MEMORY

GARRY SHANDLING is following where **JERRY SEINFELD** led, announcing that he is to quit his hugely successful sitcom, *The Larry Sanders Show*. The last series of 12 episodes starts in the US next month.

However, there is a possibility that Hank, Artie, Paula and the rest of the gang will carry on without Shandling, and that a new character will take over the talk show master's hot seat.

"I made a deal with Seinfeld that when one goes, we all go," joked Shandling. "It was supposed to be a negotiation ploy, but suddenly I'm screwed."

Shandling co-created the series about a paranoid egocentric talk show host six years ago, and is said to be unhappy about the show continuing without him. A front runner to take over is comedian Jon Stewart, who has previously made guest appearances as Larry's substitute.

Meanwhile, a question mark hangs over George Clooney's future in the ratings-busting hospital drama, *ER*, as it looks as if the actor may want to concentrate on his movie career.

"George's contract was for five years, and everyone else on the show has already renegotiated for the future," said *ER* executive producer John Wells. "The assumption has been all along that George wouldn't be staying on."

The immediate future of *The X Files* seems secure after David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson signed on for another two years, picking up $6 million and $4 million a series, respectively.

LIP SERVICE

"Look at someone like Courtney Love. People say, 'She's sold out, she's wearing Versace.' What do they think, she's waved a magic wand and healed her scars? *Of course not!* She's exactly the same person as she was. She's still as smart, still as erudite, still as articulate, still a mess" – SHIRLEY MANSON of Garbage

"I'll always be able to make a living. Even if tomorrow I lost every penny I had, somebody would be willing to pay me £500 a night to walk into a pub with a guitar and sing songs. So I just spend money like it's going out of fashion" – NOEL GALLAGHER

"These are my lucky pants. On every film I have one pair of pants and that's it. I only wear those pants" – WOODY ALLEN

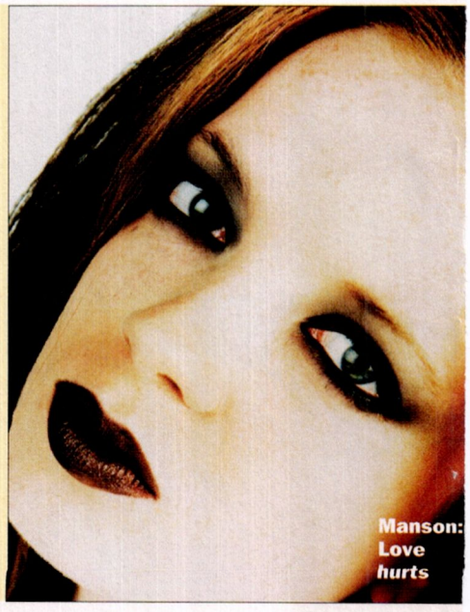
"He's got a great future ahead of him. His future looks bright" – JAKOB DYLAN on dad Bob

"There's something about saying 'nigger', as opposed to 'niggeh', that's like fingernails on a blackboard. It becomes an epithet when you put the 'er' on it, but with 'eh' it can be a term of endearment, a descriptive, it can be all kinds of things" – SAMUEL L JACKSON *(thanks for clearing that up, Sam)*

"I really envision a society where, in court, the lawyers would present the case by singing, or the politicians will make a speech and sing it" – YOKO ONO

"I think people feel sick when they hear *OK Computer*. Nausea is part of what we were trying to create" – THOM YORKE of Radiohead

"I was a very shy teenager, very shy, very serious, always in black. I never had boyfriends. I wanted to marry Dracula – he was my idea of the perfect man" – KELLY MacDONALD



Manson: Love hurts

TREMORS

movie gossip

THE most exclusive date on **THE ROLLING STONES**' US tour has to be their recent show under canvas in Honolulu for 4,000 employees and guests of Pepsi Cola, part of the fizzy drink giant's centenary celebrations, which also featured lectures by **GEORGE BUSH** and **MARGARET THATCHER**. However, the three big turns didn't appear on the same bill on the same night, more's the pity . . . New Orleans' favourite psychedelic bluesman **DR JOHN** has been getting down at London's Abbey Road studios with a posse of newfound British chums. **SUPERGRASS**, **SPIRITUALIZED**, **PAUL WELLER**, **PRIMAL SCREAM** and **BETH ORTON** all make guest appearances on the good doctor's first album for Parlophone, due for release in June . . . . . Mellow vibes aplenty at this year's Rock'N' Roll Hall Of Fame induction ceremony when **THE EAGLES**, **FLEETWOOD MAC**, **THE MAMAS & THE PAPAS** and **SANTANA** earned their place among the great and the good. The late **GENE VINCENT** was also inducted . . . Last month it was **BOB DYLAN**, **THE BAND** and The Big Pink, this month news reaches us of a museum dedicated to **THE GRATEFUL DEAD** *(Garcia, below)* soon to be up and running. Provisionally called Terrapin Station, after the late Seventies album of the same name, the museum should be open by the end of next year, once a suitable San Francisco site has been found . . . Having already appeared as themselves in *Wayne's World 2* and *The Simpsons*, **AEROSMITH** will turn up as characters in Elmore Leonard's next novel, *Be Cool*, a follow-up to *Get Shorty* in which lovable gangster Chili Palmer,

having conquered Hollywood, moves into the rock promotion business . . . **SNOOP DOGGY DOGG** is quitting Death Row Records, fearing he may be shot like label mates **TUPAC SHAKUR** and **NOTORIOUS B.I.G.** "I definitely feel my life is in danger if I stay," says Mr Dogg . . .

Kurt, Courtney and Frances Bean: in happier times

BUTCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING?

COURTNEY LOVE's attempts to block a screening of NICK BROOMFIELD's controversial *Kurt And Courtney* documentary at the Sundance Film Festival didn't stop 150 delegates from seeing a hush-hush sneak preview at Slamdance, the festival's alternative offshoot.

Love threatened to sue over the music rights of songs featured in the documentary, forcing Sundance organisers to pull the film from their opening night schedule in Park City, Utah. But Broomfield went ahead with an unannounced screening of his own, packing a small preview theatre through word of mouth.

"The film is the story of Kurt Cobain, his life, his death and his relationship with Courtney Love," Broomfield told a Sundance press conference. "But at the heart of the film lies the central issue of control.

"What it's really about is the continuing control on the part of Courtney Love to prevent this film from coming out.

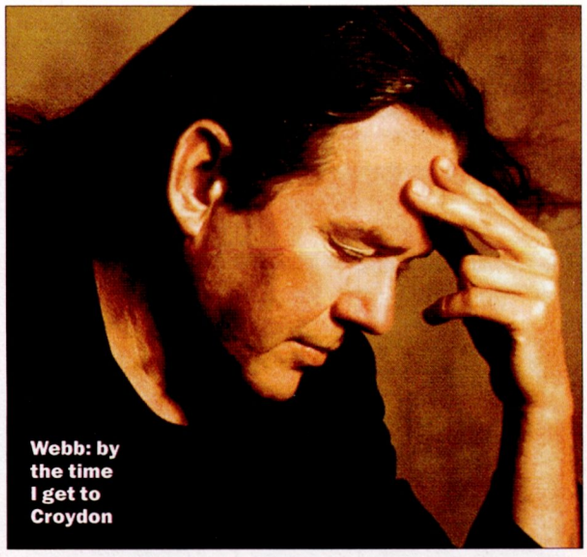
"Courtney Love originally threatened to sue the Sundance Film Festival over its programme notes, before she hit upon the issue of music rights as a better course of action. What this demonstrates is that there has never been a bona fide dispute over music rights."

Broomfield claimed he had already cleared the rights to use both Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and Hole's "Doll Parts", licensing footage from old *Top Of The Pops* shows.

"It is frightening to imagine the festival being forced to give in to the kind of control that someone with a great deal of power and money holds," he added.

Sundance founder ROBERT REDFORD came out in support of Broomfield's film.

"Nick deserves a voice," he said.



Webb: by the time I get to Croydon

KISS OF THE SPIDERMAN

JIMMY WEBB has announced details of what, astonishingly, is his first ever full British tour. The legendary singer, songwriter, musician and producer plays a total of eight concerts next month, including a three-night stint at the Jazz Cafe in Camden, London.

Webb, the writer of such evergreen pop classics as "By The Time I Get To Phoenix", "Up, Up And Away", "Wichita Lineman", "Galveston" and "MacArthur Park", will be promoting his latest album, *Ten Easy Pieces*, released by EMI Records late last year.

Other recent projects included the production of Carly Simon's well-received album of songs inspired by classic film *noirs* of the Forties.

Among Webb's biggest fans are such luminaries as Kris Kristofferson, Johnny Cash and Frank Sinatra, the latter once remarking, "Jimmy is blessed with the emotions and artistic talent of a great lyricist."

Webb last performed in the UK four years ago, when he played a week-long residency at the Cafe Royal in London.

His 1998 tour visits Croydon Ashcroft Hall (March 13), Cambridge Corn Exchange (15), London Jazz Cafe (16, 17 and 18), Edinburgh Queens Hall (20), Belfast Elmwood Hall (22), and Dublin Olympia (23).

John Travolta in *Grease*: oil be yours, Sarah

REELS ON WHEELS

Dubstar's Sarah Blackwood on her favourite tour bus video, *Grease*

"I'VE always been a big fan of musicals, ever since I saw *The Sound Of Music* as a kid. It's the first film I remember seeing, and I think it was probably Julie Andrews who made me want to be in a band in the first place. I was really into *Mary Poppins* as well. In fact, I *am* Julie Andrews. *Fiddler On The Roof* was another good one, I used to dance around the house singing *'Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Me A Match'*.

"But the one film I keep going back to again and again is *Grease*, it just puts you in a really warm and happy mood every time you see it. I had a big crush on John Travolta when I was a kid, and I loved him singing 'Sandy'. I liked the other big ballad, 'Hopelessly Devoted To You', which Olivia Newton-John sang on a swing on a porch. Dead romantic.

"I wasn't too keen on the songs they sang together, the big uptempo Number Ones, but me and me mates used to do all the dance steps and hand actions to 'Greased Lightning'. That was fun.

"We never got to do any musicals at school, although I was in a couple of straight plays. There was a plan to do *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, but it proved to be a little bit too ambitious for us youngsters. That was a shame because I'd managed to land the role of Joseph.

"It was a mixed school, but I guess I was a bit more pretentious and pushy than the lads."

SURFER FOR HIS ART?

Bowie's Pop art

DAVID BOWIE is touting his artwork on The Internet, offering limited edition lithographic prints of two of his paintings for sale. One is a self-portrait and the other a highly individual view of Iggy Pop *(pictured)*, both available signed or unsigned.

"I want to reach a wider spectrum of people," said Bowie. "The Internet is a way to get the attention of people who may not have access to gallery shows.

"If we get a good response, I'll be showing work by other artists who're not getting a fair crack of the whip."

The artwork can be viewed on The Internet at www.bowieart.com

IT may have received a mixed critical reaction in the United States, but **QUENTIN TARANTINO's** *Jackie Brown* gets a big thumbs-up from one particular fan – the author of the original novel, **ELMORE LEONARD**.

Tarantino told the audience at his lecture at the National Film Theatre, London, that Leonard was more than happy with the film adaptation of his book, originally published as *Rum Punch*.

"He liked the movie a lot," said Tarantino. "When I sent him the script and asked him what he thought, he said, 'Not only do I think it is the best adaptation of any of my work, I think it is the best script I have ever read,' which obviously made me feel good.

"He was quoted in an interview as saying, 'That was not an adaptation, that was my novel.' That made me feel good, because that is how I felt it was. When you read the script, it has the weight of a novel."

Tarantino also revealed that the three-year gap between the release of *Pulp Fiction* and the release of *Jackie Brown* was because the first movie's huge success kept him on the promotion trail for so long.

"It took *Pulp Fiction* a year just to stop *being*. There was this living dinosaur that needed to be dealt with."

The Prodigy's Maxim with Tarantino after last month's NFT lecture

TREMORS

movie gossip

KENNETH BRANAGH is teaming up with *Trainspotting* director **DANNY BOYLE** for one of the three segments of a new sci-fi comedy film, *Alien Love Triangle*. Boyle regular **JOHN HODGE** will script the episode, which is due to start filming this spring . . . **WOODY ALLEN** *(below)* has failed in his bid to be exempted from jury duty in Manhattan. When sworn in at New York's State Supreme Court, he told the judge he did not believe in

lawyers or the justice system . . . Novelist **MICHAEL CRICHTON**, creator of *Jurassic Park* and *ER*, is being sued by screenwriter **STEPHEN KESSLER**, who claims Crichton's script for *Twister* is based on his own screenplay, *Catch The Wind*. Crichton claims never to have heard of Kessler or seen his original script . . . **JOHN TRAVOLTA** may be on his way back to the discos of New York, in an as-yet-untitled musical about Manhattan's underground club scene . . . **TOM HANKS** and **MEG RYAN** are teaming up for a third romantic comedy together. *You Have Mail*, about two office workers who hate each other by day but eventually fall in love after a series of flirtations on The Internet . . . **COURTNEY LOVE** is close to joining the cast of *200 Cigarettes*, an independent feature about a group of friends travelling to a New Years Eve party in 1981. **BEN AFFLECK**, **CHRISTINA RICCI** and **GOBY HOFFMAN** have already signed up . . . *Singin' In The Rain* director **STANLEY DONEN** will be given an honorary Oscar at this year's Academy Awards ceremony on March 23 "in appreciation of a body of work marked by grace, elegance, with and visual innovation" . . . **FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA** will be this year's recipient of the Directors Guild of America's highest honour, the DW Griffith Award at the guild's 50th anniversary dinner next month . . . **MARTIN SCORSESE** has been named as the head of the jury for this year's Cannes Film Festival . . .

The King: ET, beefy, big and bouncy

ARE YOU CLONESOME TONIGHT?

DOLLY, the world's most famous sheep, may soon have some equally famous cloned company, if thousands of American rock'n'roll fans have their way.

The pressure group, Americans For Cloning Elvis (ACE), are petitioning US cloning pioneer Dr Richard Seed to use DNA from the late Elvis Presley in his human cloning experiments.

President Bill Clinton has already urged the nation's congressmen to outlaw Seed's technology because of the moral can of worms it opens, but ACE already have over 3,000 names on the petition they are sending to the Illinois doctor.

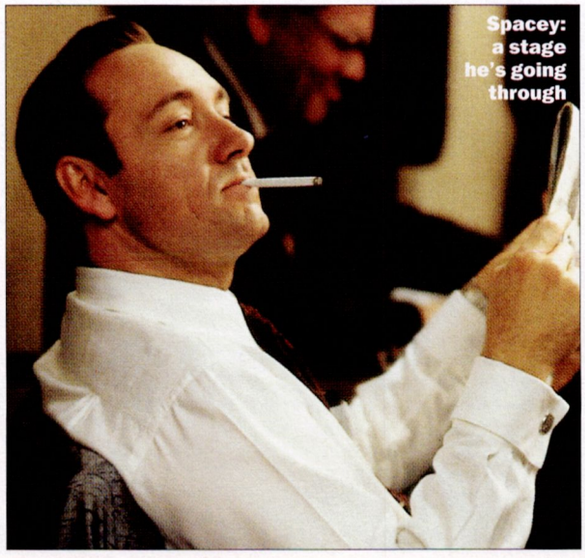
"We are in touch with two people who claim to have suitable Elvis samples for cloning," said an ACE spokesman. "One person has a Presley wart and the other has a toenail."

Anyone wishing to add their name to the ACE petition can do so via The Internet, at www.geocities.com/Vienna/1673/news.htm

TOP 10 BIZARRE ELVIS WEBSITES

1. AMERICANS FOR CLONING ELVIS See left.
2. THE DRUGGED FAT ALIEN ELVIS GALLERY El's from another planet, as these photos show.
3. ELVIS SIGHTING BULLETIN BOARD From an upstairs window in Gracelands to a water sports store in Sri Lanka.
4. ORACLE OF THE PLYWOOD ELVIS A two-foot-high garden ornament for King worshippers.
5. THE FLYING ELVI Impersonators' formation parachute team.
6. ELVIS IN LATIN The King's classic hits translated into Latin.
7. THE GUNS OF ELVIS PRESLEY Photos of El's personal armoury.
8. THE FIRST PRESLEYTERIAN CHURCH OF ELVIS THE DIVINE A house of worship listing parallels between Elvis and Christ.
9. GIMME THAT DANG PILL! Facts on the many pharmaceuticals Elvis took each day.
10. MAMA, I MISS MEMPHIS Lyrics Elvis wrote through Richard Dean, who claims he was possessed by the spirit of Presley while driving home one afternoon.

THE SPACEMAN COMETH . . .



Spacey: a stage he's going through

HOTLY tipped for a second Oscar for his role as "Hollywood" Jack Vincennes in *L.A. Confidential*, **KEVIN SPACEY** is taking a break from the movie world to return to the theatre stage – in London.

Spacey takes on the lead role in Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*, which opens at the relatively small Almeida Theatre in Islington in April. Spacey's last stage role in London was also an O'Neill play. He starred along side Jack Lemmon and Peter Gallagher in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at the Haymarket in 1986.

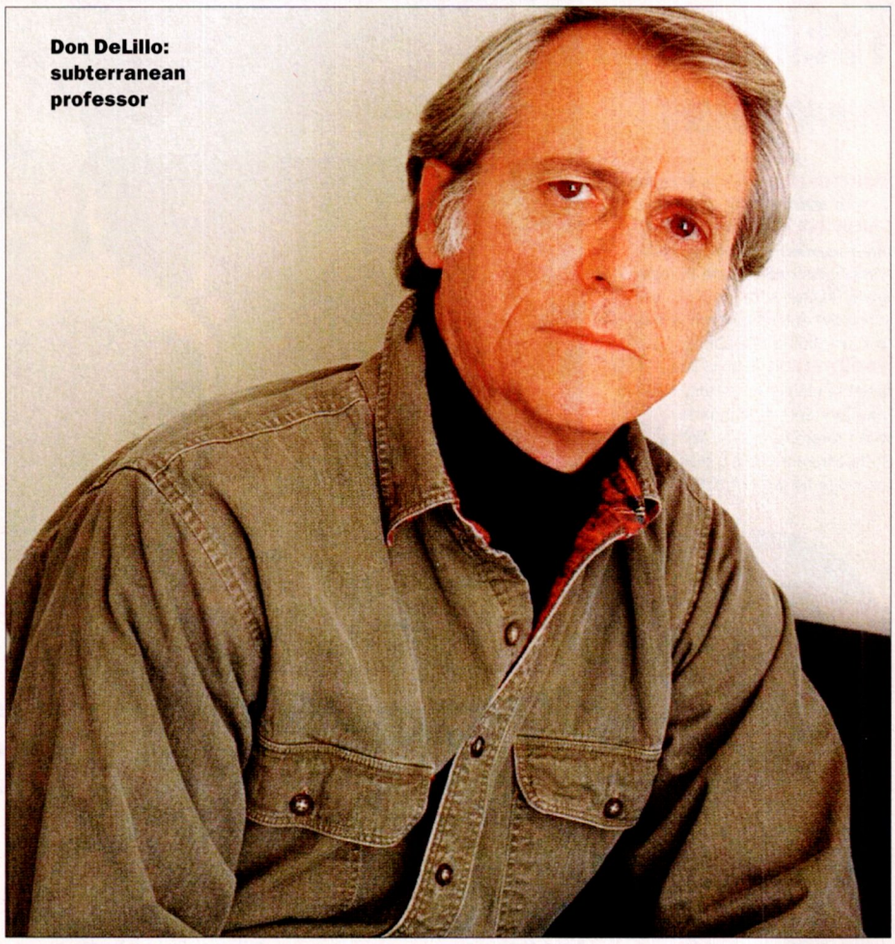
"I really want to get back to the stage and do something that will challenge me," says Spacey. "I like the Almeida, I've been there a lot to see other productions whenever I've been in London. Also, I really love the city, love working there, and I thought, 'Hey! Why not tackle a really monster play in a really cool city?'"

Spacey is also planning more theatre work in the US for later in the year: "There's been two plays I've been trying to set up in America, it's just been a matter of finding the time – not that I've been hugely busy on the movie front. I've actually only made two films since the Academy Award *(Best Supporting Actor for The Usual Suspects in 1995)*. I've only done *L.A. Confidential* and *Midnight In The Garden Of Good And Evil* since then, so it's not like I've been churning out movies in the wake of my perceived Oscar fame."

The Iceman Cometh runs from April 2 to May 23 at the Almeida. Tickets are on sale now

YOU HAD TO BE THERE

Don DeLillo's *Underworld* is one of the great American novels of the decade. Last month, he gave a rare public reading at London's Congress Hall . . .



Don DeLillo: subterranean professor

WHEN it came time for the *literati* to nominate their books of 1997, Don DeLillo's *Underworld* proved a surprisingly popular choice. The novel had still to be published in Britain and was, in any case, 827 pages long: a doorstop, a magnum opus yet!

The rush to judgement suggested Major Literary Event. The pitch of the anticipation had scarcely lowered when Don DeLillo appeared at Congress Hall. The subterranean bunker was packed out, not with trend-hoppers and bandwagoneers and buzz-junkies, but with avid readers, with – gulp! – serious types.

Presenting a work as complex as *Underworld* was never going to be easy. Explaining the structure alone might take half-an-hour

For such a prodigious wordsmith, DeLillo is surprisingly slight. His looks are unfussy and academic. His manner is quietly assured. He appeared, offered a few brief introductory words and started to read. You coulda heard a pin drop. You could hear necks craning, brows being furrowed, ears being cupped.

You could barely hear DeLillo.

His delivery was matter-of-fact, undramatic, as if he was making a forensic report. He made no attempt to put on a performance, no attempt to quicken the text. He simply read. The PA, which must have come to some understanding, made no attempt to amplify.

If DeLillo's austerity was somewhat unexpected, his choice of material was even more so. Instead of enthralling the audience with one of the book's many set-pieces, he chose to read a series of vignettes from its penultimate part.

A strange decision.

This section provides the book's emotional bedrock and the key to its mysteries, a kind of coherence. When he reaches it, having negotiated the frantic, disjointed action and reverse chronology, the dazzled reader achieves a kind of homecoming, a sudden unwonted clarity.

It would not have this effect, obviously, on those coming to it cold. Nor did it. DeLillo's dry style, his brisk clip, left impressions of Bronx life in the Fifties but little else. Pity. Of course, deciding on how to present a work as complex and ambitious as this novel was never going to be easy. Explaining the structure alone might take half-an-hour. DeLillo himself only found it by chance.

In conversation, after the reading, he marvelled anew: "I found myself writing a sentence about a 16-year old boy in the Bronx, listening to the ball game on a portable radio on the roof of his building.

"I had no idea why, but, in some mysterious way, I seemed to know who this kid was. When, months later, I decided that this piece of writing would extend itself into a full length novel, it occurred to me that this kid who occupies one sentence in the first 20,000 words of the book was the main character!"

The novel famously begins with a description of this ball game, which took place on the same day in October, 1951 that the Soviets tested an atomic bomb.

It was the winning hit, grotesquely, which was dubbed "the shot heard round the world". This juxtaposition "directly produced the novel".

Underworld is DeLillo's attempt to discover whether these events are truly connected.

His solution is ingenious and profound, his vision managing to achieve aesthetic as well as critical mass.

Don't let a little thing like hype put you off.

Bleddyn Butcher

Underworld is published by Picador, priced £18

COMING SOON TO A SCREEN NEAR YOU

Harmony Korine's *Gummo*

WHAT'S IT ABOUT? Two rat-faced, teenage deadbeats patrol the godforsaken white-trash backwater of Xenia, Ohio, killing cats to sell to an unscrupulous local butcher. The money they earn is spent on sniffing glue and hiring the services of a mentally retarded prostitute. Meanwhile, the town's assorted perverts and rednecks tell their tragicomic life stories, documentary-style, to the camera.

WHO'S IN IT? Only four professional actors, including the film's 23-year-old writer/director Harmony Korine – who also scripted Larry Clark's controversial *Kids* – and his girlfriend Chloe Sevigny, star of *Kids* and *Trees Lounge*. The rest of the cast are friends of the director, nervous first-timers and all-American freaks.

WHY ALL THE FUSS? Remember the tabloid kerfuffle over *Kids*? Imagine a sequel set in grotesque Deep South suburbia, then stir in gratuitous animal torture, the murder of a comatose old lady, gay dwarf sex and a gleefully absent moral framework. Already slammed in the broadsheets for its inclusion in last year's London Film Festival, *Gummo* has something to annoy everyone, and not just those crusading papers who found whimsical art movies like *Crash* and *Kissed* offensive.

A JOYLESS WALLOW IN THE METAPHORICAL SEWER THEN? Far from it. For all his provocative methods, Korine has created a stunningly original debut, cross-cutting between film styles with the verve of Godard while assembling a gallery of Southern gargoyles that William Faulkner would recognise. *Gummo* is a deeply poetic, hugely funny black comedy. Assuming he survives the censors and savage reviews, Korine is a major talent in the making: a trailer-park Fellini on crack.

Gummo is released on April 17

Gummo: all-American freaks

The Full Monty: comes complete with a glossary for tossers . . . 'Er, get your cream crackers out for the lads . . .'

YOU'LL NEVER EAT LUNCHBOX IN THIS TOWN AGAIN . . .

NOW officially the most successful British film of all time, Hollywood tipsters reckon *The Full Monty* could be in the running for a Best Picture nomination at next month's Oscars. But do the Americans actually understand it?

Help is at hand for our friends across the pond, as cinemas in several major cities in the States have been offering punters a pamphlet containing a glossary of the colourful language used by Robert Carlyle and chums. Never again shall a Yank confuse his widger with a woofter . . .

BENDER, n.Brit.slang, a male homosexual
BOG, n.Brit.slang, lavatory
CLOCK, vb, to recognise
CHUFFIN', adj.slang, a strong exclamation: a chuffin' job
CHUFFER, n, a contemptible person
CREAM CRACKER, n, thin, crisp biscuit, often eaten with cheese
DIVVY, n.slang, fool
EPPY, n.Brit.slang, throw an eppy, have an epileptic fit, lose one's temper
GIT, n.Brit.slang, 1. a contemptible person, often a fool 2. a bastard [in the sense: to beget]
KEGS, n.pl.slang, trousers
LAM, vb.slang, thrash or beat
LUNCHBOX, n, slang, male genitalia
MALARKEY, n.Inf, nonsense, rubbish
NUTTER, n.slang, mad or eccentric person
PIGEON CHEST, n, deformity of the chest characterised by an abnormal protrusion of the breast bone, caused by rickets
SODDING, adj.Brit.slang, an exclamation of annoyance
SOMMUT, n.Northern Brit, a dialect word for something
TOSSER, n.Brit.slang, someone who accomplishes something easily or casually
WIDGER, n.Brit.slang, penis
WOOFTER, n.Brit.slang, a male homosexual

See interview with The Full Monty's Hugo Speer on page 56

A NEARLY FULL MONTY!

THE five surviving members of the **MONTY PYTHON** team are reuniting for a comedy festival in America next month, but are unlikely to perform any new material.

JOHN CLEESE, ERIC IDLE, MICHAEL PALIN, TERRY JONES and **TERRY GILLIAM** will appear together as part of a retrospective evening of the team's work at the US Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, Colorado. They'll be answering questions from the audience, introducing TV and film clips, and may well be persuaded to re-enact a handful of their classic sketches. The evening will be filmed for future TV broadcast.

Palin said it would be a strange event for all the Pythons, their first public reunion since the death of **GRAHAM CHAPMAN** in 1989.

"We've considered getting together before, but there's been this feeling that we aren't quite complete without Graham," he said.

Palin said there were no concrete plans for any further collaborations after the festival, but that there was a slim chance of them working together in the future.

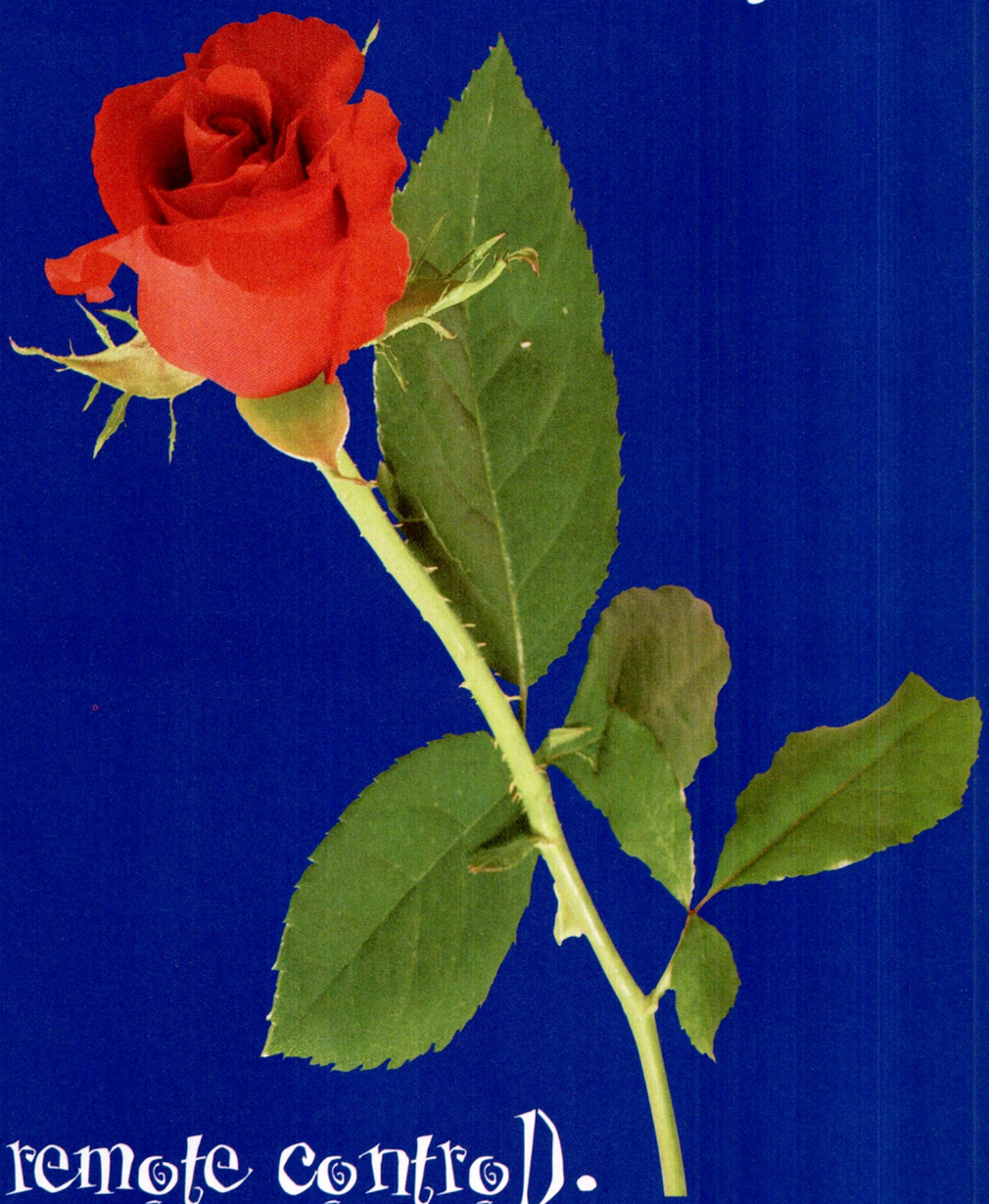
"When we meet up face to face, there's always the chance that something may come of it. If we have a good time in Aspen, that may just mean we'd consider a future project, most likely a movie, I think. That would be our best proposition for a full-scale reunion.

"The problem now is we're all very old and our sense of hearing is not what it used to be, although we still manage to walk unaided."

The Circus flies again

Pictorial Press

New Improved Foreplay.



(Now with remote control).

Quality flowers hand-delivered anywhere in the UK by professional florists.
Order by Feb 11 for guaranteed delivery on Valentine's Day.

TELEFLORIST

0800 **111 800**

www.teleflorist.co.uk

DR KNOW

You've got the questions – he's got the answers

TO supplement earlier information given by the good Doctor on the subject of that ginger-haired angel, **ALICIA WITT**, I can tell you that, in addition to the aforementioned *Four Rooms* and *Fun*, she also had a smallish part in the Richard Dreyfuss movie, *Mr Holland's Opus*, in which she played an adorable pig-tailed clarinet player. It's a crime that such a beautiful, talented actress like Alicia is still best-known for a slightly above average sitcom like *Cybill*.
Michael Armstrong, Leicester

ALICIA was first seen, aged five, in David Lynch's *Dune*, playing Kyle MacLachlan's psychic sister, and she worked for Lynch again a few years later in an episode of *Twin Peaks*. Eagle-eyed viewers of *Cybill* may also remember her character, Zoey, had a *Blue Velvet* poster in her bedroom. Ms Witt also turned up to unnerve Tim Roth in 1993's *Bodies, Rest And Motion*.
Chris Blake, Manchester
It's good to know it's not just your favourite Doc looking into all things Alicia. Fans who missed her amazing turn in Fun can now pick it up on Tartan Video.

GARY GLITTER was very publicly snipped out of the final cut of the **SPICE GIRLS** movie, and by all accounts a few more celebs' contributions ended up on the cutting-room floor, presumably for less controversial reasons. That got me wondering if there were any star names who suffered a similar fate in **THE BEATLES** movies in the Sixties.
Kenny Carlisle, Leicester
Mark Lewisohn's indispensable day-by-day account of the Fab Four, The Complete Beatles Chronicle, mentions a scene the band filmed with Frankie Howerd and EastEnders matriarch Wendy Richard for Help!, in which the comedian played a drama coach called Sam Ahab and the soap queen one of his pupils. Lewisohn says only that it was a long scene and gives no reason for its absence in the finished print. Probably would have slackened the pace of an otherwise madcap movie, suggests the Doctor.

Could you help me regarding a film that appears to have dropped off the face of the planet, namely *More American Graffiti*, the sequel to **GEORGE LUCAS**' original?
Jonathan Darby, Wolverhampton
Directed by BWL Norton in 1979, More American Graffiti was a confusing, episodic affair which was based on a New Year's Eve reunion of characters from the first film and then haphazardly flashed forward to different points in the future to tell the story of what happened to the Californian school kids. Ron Howard (then a star courtesy of TV's Happy Days) and Cindy Williams (Shirley in the Happy Days spin-off, Laverne & Shirley) returned to the fold, but the services of Oscar-winner Richard Dreyfuss proved too expensive for the movie's meagre budget. Slated on its original release, it has never been available on video, at least not in the UK.

Please could you tell me who performs a song on the 1976 episode of the BBC TV series, *The Rock 'n' Roll Years*. By the lyrics, I think the title is "Mozambique". Is there any chance of this track still being available in the shops?
Sean Harrington, Port Talbot
Most definitely, Sean. It is, of course, the Bob Dylan classic called, as you so rightly point out, "Mozambique", which can be found on the album, Desire. It is still available, along with the bulk of Bob's massive back catalogue.

Send your symptoms to Dr Know, Uncut Editorial, IPC Magazines, 13th Floor, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS

Katz Pictures

Alicia Witt: the ginger princess

Reputations reassessed. This month: is JACK NICHOLSON just a Joker, or what?

SOMEWHERE along the line, Jack Nicholson seems to have picked up the tip, probably from John Wayne, that if you tallkk slloowlly, ennunnciiatting every worrd with a wholle heap of extra vowels and coonnsonnants, nnoott onnly ddoo you bbaaagg yyoourrseellff more scrrrreeeennn tiiimme butt ppeeopplle thhinnk yyou're a heavyyweight acctorr annd a rreall maan's maannn to booottt. Talk like that in real life and people'd think you'd caught a touch of the Forrest Gumps.

In Hollywood, though, everryonne resspects a sloww talking guyy. One suspects *Chinatown*, for instance, could have been brought in at half the length if Nicholson hadn't insisted on spinning out inconsequential lines like "Yeah . . . summmerr colds arre thhhee worrsst" as if they were loaded with significance. Did anyone ever labour like Nicholson to throw away a line?

In real life, Nicholson might sound like a half-wit. By his looks he might also be taken for the same. That slack jaw, that Neanderthal hairline, those eyes in different orbits, all make him look like some remedial Appalachian hillbilly looking on his cousin with a lecherous eye. It's as if the fictional lobotomy he received at the end of *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* kinda half-worked. On screen, however, this has the effect on weak-minded machismo aficionados of making Nicholson seem wild, unhinged, with a cool eye for the main chance.

Nicholson, then, is seen to betoken some sort of macho substance, a sure shot, money in the bank. Yet the variety of his roles reflects a curiously hollow, chameleon-like figure who, in his heart of hearts, feels frantically unfulfilled by his career. Brought up by women, his father having gone AWOL, you don't have to be a psychologist to figure out the desperate, "Look at me, Pa!" motivation that impels his prodigious posturings. He's been all over the shop, from cartoon villain to labour boss, to madman, to slick private eye – he's tried everything, tried to be all men to all things, so to speak – yet his Jack-isms, his pointlessly showy inflections, always get in the way and ensure that, paradoxically, he's always playing (with) himself.

He's been in some great films. *The Shining*, for instance. And what's the most famous, most mood-puncturingly annoying moment of that movie? "Heerrrrreeeesss Johnnnnyyyy!" a line improvised by Nicholson, a line which is merely Nicholson saying "Hi, guys!" Oh yes, Nicholson has been in some great films. He could have been in *The Godfather*, but, somehow, you're glad he wasn't. You can imagine him bursting out of the toilets in the assassination scene, shouting, "Ittt'ssss shhowwtiimmme!"

The Cult of Jack as paragon of expansive male panache was brilliantly parodied by Keith Allen in The Comic Strip's *Strike*. In big, tinted specs and cummerbund, he lumbers up to the awards podium and announces, "Popppaaa's hhommme!" Adoration for Nicholson is mesmerised, uncritical. People say "Jack" the way some rock fans say "Weller". He's credited for things for which he wasn't actually res-ponsible – for improvising his famous UFO speech in the campfire scene of *Easy Rider*, for instance. Nicholson sheepishly admits the whole thing was prescripted from Dennis Hopper's idea. He's taken for a mean mutha who doesn't give a shit about Hollywood, a barfly and a philanderer, when actually he's a wet liberal who spent the Seventies quietly crying like a woman when they didn't give him an Oscar, not much of a drinker and . . . well, all right, he's a bit of a philanderer, but you've only got to see this ageing lardass waddling after Michelle Pfeiffer in *The Witches Of Eastwick* like a hippo on heat to realise precisely how cool he is.

That Nicholson will probably be ultimately remembered for his hammery as The Joker in the pitiful *Batman* is a fate he deserves. The whole thing was an exercise in money-grubbing buffoonery, but it was amazing to hear hip cinéastes fall about awestruck in the aisles when Jack delivered the "Waitt till thheyy get allloadaa mee!" line.

Nicholson has spent the Nineties squandering his revived major-player status either with self-caricaturing rubbish like *Wolf*, mainstream fare like *A Few Good Men* or the self-indulgent, unwatchable *The Crossing Guard*, in which the script has Jack flanked by adoring, nubile strippers much of the time. Yeah, right.

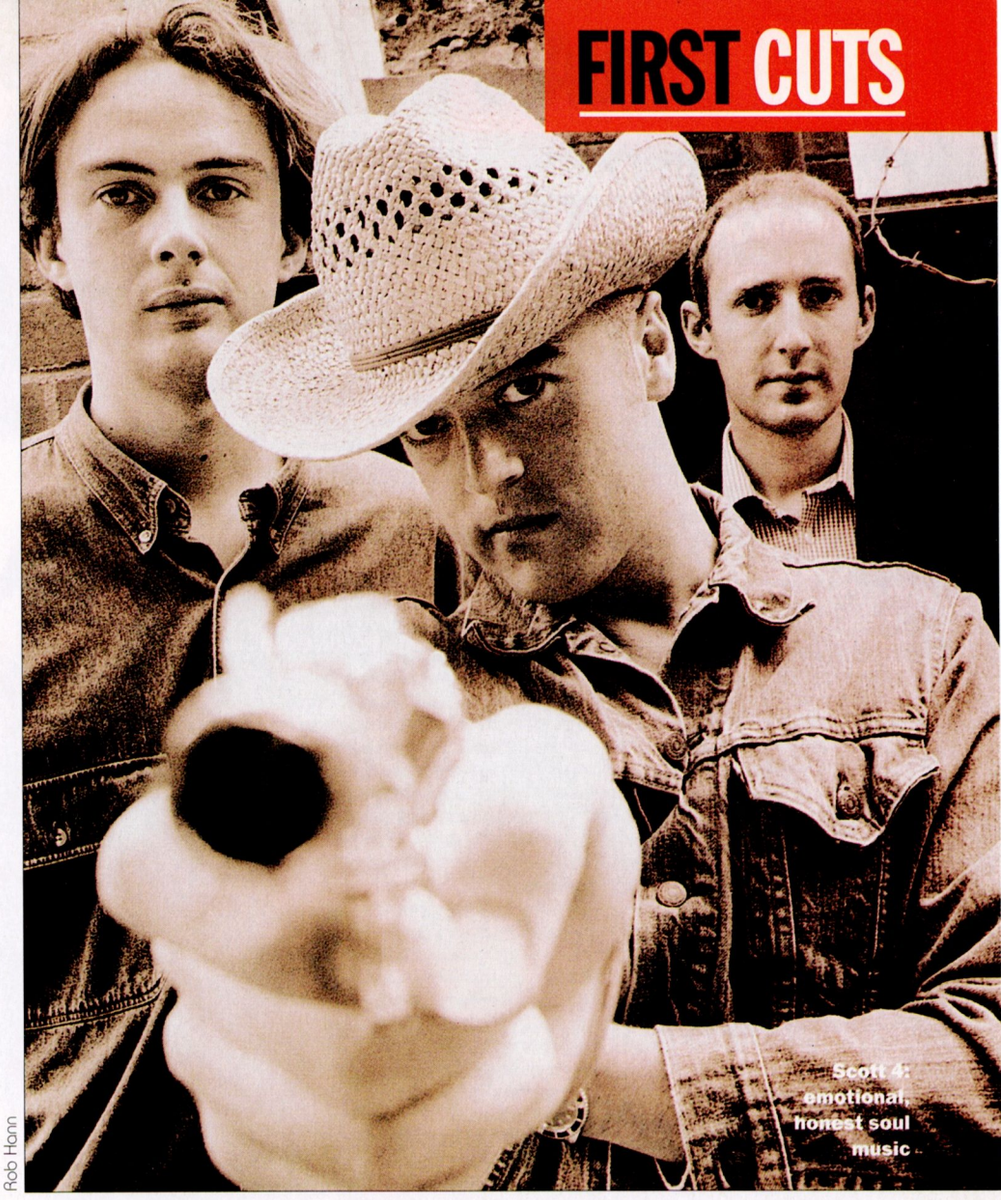
The Joker has become a clown for real. His unfulfilled project, his Wellesian dream, remains a cinematic stab at Napoleon. Now that I'd like to see . . .

The Reaper

Nicholson: Jack hammer

SCOTT 4

From Nashville, Tennessee to north London



Rob Hann

Scott 4: emotional, honest soul music

THIS year, there's only two things you're going to dance to. One is Country and the other is Western.

You may think that the most interesting developments in country music are coming from the other side of the Atlantic, but there's a small part of north London that's doing its bit. That'll be Scott 4, a trio comprising Stetson-clad singer Scott Blixen, guitarist John Moody and drummer Ed Tilly. Together since August, 1995, they've added their own distinctive spin to their beloved country music.

"In a lot of people's minds, country represents a conservative American culture," says Blixen. "To us, though, country is an entirely emotional experience. It's honest, it's soul music. The lyrics, sound and production coming off an old record can make your heart sing. But I'm not interested in making authentic country music. I'm not trying to sound American. Our songs take an element of country and filter it through our experiences of living in London in the Nineties."

Blixen, who admits to having suffered from "personal health problems" in the past, claims that his recovery sparked the start of Scott 4. "I came out of this bad time and found it gave me the ability to write," he says simply. Lyrically, their three releases (last summer's mini-album, *Elektro Akoustic Und Volksmechanik*, the December EP, *Deutsche LP Record*, and a full-length album, *Recorded In-State*, out this month) are driven by an aching sense of desolation, occasionally despair.

As Scott explains of the stand-out track, "East Winter", which also appeared on *Elektro Akoustic*: "It's about the sense of isolation you get being cooped up, a feeling that you're gonna be tipped over the edge. Everybody feels like that sometimes."

Taking the forsaken beauty of country's finest (and darkest) moments, they strip it down to its rawest components and infuse what remains with slowed-down breakbeats and lo-fi production values.

If David Lynch had set *Wild At Heart* in London at the end of the millennium, Scott 4 would have recorded the soundtrack . . .

"What I found upsetting about the London, Britpoppy, cor blimey, apples and pears thing was the idea of people making music that was overtly specific to where they lived," begins Blixen. "It's stupid and redundant – I mean, you can talk to someone in LA in real time while you're walking around in the Wiltshire countryside. This isn't the 19th century; no one's isolated anymore.

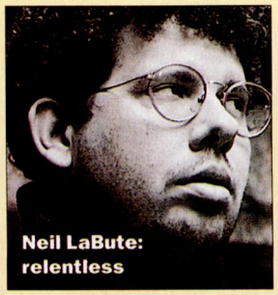
"The whole world's culture is coming in at you 24 hours a day. I write about desolation in an emotional sense, and you can experience that feeling in LA or London."

Certainly, their forthcoming debut LP is an emotionally-charged listening experience. Moving and bleak, it's a strung-out, heart-breaking odyssey that charts a musical route from Paris, Texas to Highbury, London. Go on – make your heart sing . . .
Michael Bonner

Recorded In-State is out now on Satellite Records. In The Company Of Men is out now

NEIL LABUTE

Introducing the controversial film-maker



Neil LaBute: relentless

NEIL Labute is describing the worldwide reactions to his first, breathtakingly bold film, *In The Company Of Men*. "They've run the gamut, from very good to extremely bad. But that's OK, I'd much rather have love and hate than indifference, I think."

Chad, the film's silver-tongued anti-hero, played by Aaron Eckart, and his buddy/rival, Howard (Matt Malloy), hatch a heinous "revenge" scheme to gratuitously break the heart of an innocent (and mute) young woman. Yet there are emotional pitfalls inherent in such a plan.

"The men are competitive, there's this male gamesmanship thing", explains writer/director Labute. "Not that women can't be malicious or devious. But there's something about the hunt that's very male.

"But, by the end, the woman realises the thing which seems most frail about her – her deafness – is her best weapon. By simply turning away, she is in control. Once she doesn't look at these men any more, they have no power over her. It would've been easier to make a facile film about hating women, but it's broader than that."

Labute, a New Yorker who won a fellowship to study at London's Royal Court Theatre, says he's "probably more influenced by English playwrights than big films. I like Brenton, Bond, Churchill, Barker. It's good to come back here with some of the bile they used to spew!"

He's just finished shooting his second feature, with an impressive cast (Eckhart again, plus Nastassja Kinski, Jason Patric and Amy Brenneman).

***In The Company Of Men*: the evil that men do**

"I have a certain world view and I want to extend it through a couple of films. I've always liked Eric Rohmer, Mike Leigh, Woody Allen, and I'm as manipulative as the next guy, but I prefer to be relentless about it rather than cloying. This next one's more of a mosaic about intimate relationships: men and women and fur flying! Not so plot-driven. Like a *Carnal Knowledge* or *Husbands And Wives*. It's very much about sex, without any in it. Post-romantic, yeah!"
Chris Roberts

STRANGE DAYS

Odd tales from the flipside of music and movies. This month we dive into the world of Mob molls and nude grandmothers – the glorious LIZ RENAY

SOMEWHERE in the handbook on how to treat the pin-ups of your teenage years, there should be a passage which advises against emptying a jar of live cockroaches on their naked bodies.

But it's a tribute to the star quality and sheer trooperdom of the legendary **LIZ RENAY** that she never even flinched when indie *schlockmeister* John Waters demanded a scene with bugs dancing across her butt for his 1977 lesbian melodrama, *Desperate Living*.

Renay's is not the most famous name in the history of Hollywood high life, but her bizarre story – runaways, beauty contests, gangsters, prison, stripping and streaking – reads like one of Waters' own screenplays.

"She is my idea of total glamour," Waters wrote in his autobiography, *Shock Value*. "Her life has been filled with adventures and insanity."

Renay was born in Mesa, Arizona in 1927, and ran away from home in her early teens to escape her religiously fanatical parents. Her first step on the road to infamy was winning both a bra manufacturer-sponsored beauty pageant and a Marilyn Monroe lookalike contest in California.

Soon she was on her way to Las Vegas where she had a brief and undistinguished career as a showgirl, but returned to Hollywood for a string of cameo roles in low-budget B-movies. On the set of one such film, she was introduced to gangster Mickey Cohen and promptly moved in with him. Constantly photographed hanging onto Cohen's arm in the garish tabloid scandal sheets of the early Fifties, Liz gained a reputation as a trusted Mafia moll, one of only a handful of women who knew how much cash was coming in and precisely where the bodies were buried.

Her underworld connections landed her in hot water in 1957, following the barber shop rub-out of Mob czar Albert Anastasia. Grilled intermittently by the police over the next four years, Renay never squealed and was eventually found guilty of perjury and given a three-year prison sentence. Realising that a jail term was almost inevitable, she cashed in during the run-up to her sentencing by selling her paintings for $5,000 a throw and recording and broadcasting a selection of her poetry.

In jail, she began writing her autobiography, *My Face For The World To See*, which topped West Coast best-seller lists on her release in the mid-Sixties. Next she teamed up with her daughter, Brenda, for a stripping double act on America's fading burlesque circuit.

The early Seventies was a relatively low-key period for Liz (she appeared in the 1973 Blaxploitation horror sci-fi thriller, *Blackenstein*), but she hit the headlines again at the height of the streaking craze when, aged 47, she raced nude down Hollywood Boulevard and was promptly arrested for indecency. As fate would have it, Liz's streak was captured on film by a tourist with a home movie camera, but despite such irrefutable material evidence, the jury of eight men and four women found her not guilty.

Back in the limelight, Renay announced she was about to start work on a second autobiography, *My Ass For The World To Kiss*, and resumed her burlesque career, billing herself as the streaking grandmother.

Liz was relatively low profile after playing lesbian murderess Muffy St Jacques in *Desperate Living*, making the occasional walk-on appearance in cheapo horror flicks, and finally finished her second book in 1992, now retitled *My First 2,000 Men*, vividly chronicling such notable boudoir conquests as Jerry Lewis, Marlon Brando and Marilyn Monroe's ex-husband, baseball hero Joe DiMaggio (remember, this is a girl who first tasted fame as a Monroe lookalike). Oh, her seven husbands also get a look-in.

Fast forward to the present day, and Liz looks set for yet another revival. Recovering in Las Vegas from hip replacement surgery, the now 70-year-old Renay is said to be returning to the movies in *Corpse Grinders II*, co-starring Ed Wood regulars Dolore Fuller and Conrad Brooks.

But what really whets the appetite is the planned Jack Nicholson-produced movie version of *My Face For The World To See*, the film rights to the book having been sold for a cool quarter of a million dollars.

Liz Renay's story covers a fascinating 50 years and it's not over yet . . .

BFI

The rockabilly pioneer, the television cop, the singing politician and the legendary country producer . . .

Carl Perkins and famous fans at the 'supergroup' special

Associated Press

CARL PERKINS, who died last month aged 65, having suffered three strokes in a few short weeks, was more of a hero to musicians than the masses. A rockabilly pioneer, Sun recording artist, and buddy to the likes of Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis and Johnny Cash, Perkins is still, more than 40 years after the event, perhaps best known for writing "Blue Suede Shoes".

Elvis left Sam Phillips' Memphis stable for the glory and glamour of RCA Records and Ed Sullivan's TV show, but Carl moseyed down to Nashville and kicked back with some country pals. He still managed to make some ferocious rock music ("Put Your Cat Clothes On", "Matchbox", "Honey Don't", "Everybody's Trying To Be My Baby"), but he'd exiled himself to fame's suburbs and would never be part of the big picture again.

Perkins spent 10 years as a sideman for Johnny Cash on seemingly endless tours across America during the Sixties, while over in Blighty a little combo called The Beatles sang his praises to anyone who'd listen, and covered several of his songs on their early albums, before Lennon & McCartney got into their stride as songwriters.

In common with Bo Diddley, Chuck Berry, Gene Vincent and Jerry Lee Lewis, Perkins was considered almost a God in Europe, and the young bucks he inspired never forgot him. George Harrison, Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton and Dave Edmunds lined up with the master for a "supergroup" TV special in the mid-Eighties, which famously reduced the great man to tears – he genuinely had no idea just how big an influence his music was.

Edmunds has an anecdote which perfectly illustrates Perkins' nonchalance and self-effacing attitude. During rehearsals for a short UK tour in the late Seventies, Carl kicked into "Blue Suede Shoes", omitting his trademark pause after the opening line, *"Well, it's a-one for the money."* Edmunds picked him up on it, but Perkins shrugged his shoulders, claiming there shouldn't be a pause, that it was a mistake on the original 1955 recording. "Christ," says Edmunds. "Ten million bands have *copied* that mistake."

JACK LORD, who died at home in Honolulu last month, aged 77, was arguably American television's most enduring cop. As no-nonsense police chief Steve McGarrett in *Hawaii Five-0*, he was a fixture of TV schedules the world over from 1968 to 1980, the series running for a formidable 284 episodes.

Hawaii Five-O initially met with resistance from both the public and programmers, many detractors turned off by its depiction of violent crime in what was hitherto seen as an island paradise.

However, the grittiness of the storylines and Lord's towering central portrayal soon became essential viewing, and at its peak, the series reached an estimated worldwide weekly audience of 300 million viewers.

He studied at the famed Actors Studio in New York with Marlon Brando and Paul Newman while working as a car salesman.

After a handful of Broadway stage roles, his big break came when he was cast as Felix Leiter, James Bond's American spy buddy in the first 007 movie, *Dr No*, a role which eventually led to him being offered the McGarrett gig.

When *Hawaii Five-0* finished, Lord stayed on in Honolulu, enjoying an almost regal lifestyle as a local hero. His widow, Marie, said: "Jack loved acting and he loved these islands."

SONNY BONO, who died, aged 62, following a ski-ing accident at Heavenly Resort, Lake Tahoe, last month, was a singer, songwriter, musician, actor and, latterly, politician. Yet, despite these many strings to his bow, he will forever be remembered mostly as Cher's other half.

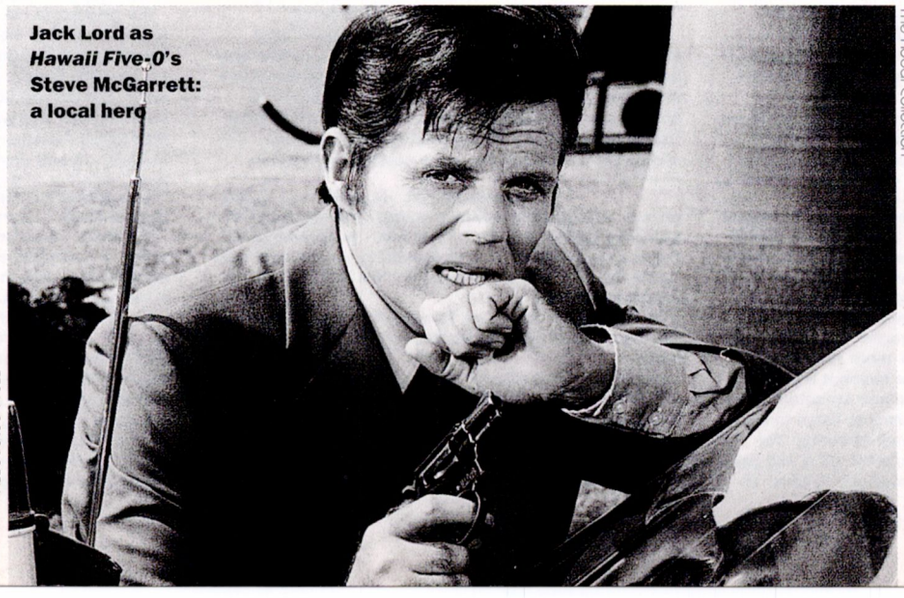
The couple met in 1963 when they were both minor players in Phil Spector's legendary Wall of Sound record productions.

Sixteen-year-old Cherilyn Sarkisian LaPiere was an occasional back-up singer, 27-year-old Sonny a guitarist and percussionist.

With the global success of their first single, "I Got You Babe", Sonny & Cher became the acceptable face of hippiedom, mainstream beatniks perfectly palatable to a mass TV audience.

Their television show was a ratings-topper throughout the Seventies, even after the couple divorced.

Later, Bono went into semi-retirement, making the occasional film appearance (*Airplane!*, *Hairspray*), and then moved full-time into politics, first as mayor of Palm Springs, and then as a conservative Republican congressman.



Jack Lord as *Hawaii Five-0*'s Steve McGarrett: a local hero

Associated Press

The Kobal Collection

OWEN BRADLEY, who died in Nashville last month, aged 82, was country music's most respected producer, fashioning the early careers of such stars as Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline and Brenda Lee.

He was also at the controls for kd lang's acclaimed 1988 album, *Shadowlands*.

The Beatles receiving their *NME* Poll awards from Tony Bennett

Getty Images

It's been a hard day's riot!

At the height of the awards season – Brats last month, Brits and Grammys just around the corner – we look back at a star-studded *NME* Pollwinners concert

NME readers – take a bow! You were responsible for choosing the stars for the greatest pop show in the world. By voting for them in the *NME* popularity poll, you put them on the stage at Wembley's Empire Pool.

In the audience of 10,000 on Sunday afternoon were teenagers from the world over, and for three-and-a-half hours they were united, enjoying a procession of top talent.

THE MOODY BLUES bounced onstage in their dark blue suits and pounded a storm out of "Hey Bo Diddley". Denny Laine broke into "Go Now", only they didn't. The pianist had not switched on his amp. After the faulty start, their Number One hit brought a rave reaction from the audience at its conclusion.

HERMAN'S HERMITS led off into a catchy hand clapper, "Wonderful World". Showing no signs of nerves at all, Herman gave a highly professional performance, and his rendering of "Mrs Brown You've Got A Lovely Daughter" proved something new.

THE ROLLING STONES entered the arena to the biggest ovation and Mick Jagger swung into his mean and moody routine with "Everybody Needs Somebody To Love", which broke into the slower "Pain In My Heart". Faultless timing and knowing just where to put the emphasis in his phrasing brought hysterical reactions from the fans.

The faster tempo of "Round And Around" provided Jagger with the opportunity of going into his more violent movements, and he whirled around at one moment like a berserk windmill. The Stones showed how important it is not only to give the audience something to listen to but also to watch, and Mick's facial dramatics during "The Last Time" are an education. They rounded off a wild performance with "Everybody Needs Somebody To Love" as an encore, and Bill and Keith joined in the vocals. No one was left in any doubt as to who was the most popular group in this fantastic first-half.

DONOVAN – this was the act so many fans had been waiting for, if only for its curiosity value. Would Donovan match up to his publicity? The roughly-dressed folk singer answered in a way that should silence his critics forever. He came on stage to a fantastic barrage of screams. First number was his hit, "Catch The Wind", sung firmly and confidently, and he followed it with a slow wailer, "You're Gonna Need Somebody When I'm Gone".

THEM – these quiet Irishmen weren't so quiet after they'd ambled on to the stage! Lead singer Van Morrison led the audience to fever pitch through his cymbal-clashing "Here Comes The Night", followed immediately by another number that had many of the audience jumping from their seats. The tempo went faster and faster, and at times sounded like some ecstatic pop version of a Cossack dance!

TOM JONES was a real highlight. He swung and waved his way through three raving numbers. The big sound of trumpets, guitars and sax behind him – provided by The Squires – was just right. Tom opened in punchy style with "Little By Little" and then went into "It's Not Unusual" (screams galore).

Then a rostrum was rolled forward across the stage. The instruments were set up and on the drum were two words – **THE BEATLES**!!!!

Compere Keith Fordyce's announcement was buried in a literal avalanche of applause, screams, thumping and cheering. Especially screams. I felt as if the roof might blow off. In seconds, John, Paul, George and Ringo were on stage, drawing gasps of appreciation from the girl fans at their new stage gear. I think you could best describe the jackets as light tan, Army-style (a bit Russian perhaps?) and the trousers as tight jet black.

Suddenly, George plucked the first notes of "I Feel Fine" on his guitar – and it was like a signal for a riot! How many of the girls present kept more or less in their seats I still do not know. The girl next to me fell on her knees weeping. After "I Feel Fine", Paul managed to shout "Hello, how are you?", into the mike. That was all he could manage above the noise. John stood chewing gum, smiling nonchalantly at his plight!

The girl next to me threw her hair brush at them as Paul launched into the vocal of "She's A Woman". I tried to stop her throwing her wire roller-comb, but no use. She flung it at the stage, almost in a delirium, and it just missed George's head. George was in terrific vocal form on this typical "coloured" number. John and Paul joined forces on the vocal for their lilter, "Baby's In Black". It was great stuff. Then came "Ticket To Ride", and the screams rose to such a level of fury it was almost impossible to hear anything but the solid beat of Ringo's drums.

The finale – that long-time Beatles raver, "Long Tall Sally". It proved an incredible end to a truly incredible performance, with the group struggling off stage amid a barrage of objects. I'm sure the fans meant well!

The presentation of Poll Awards came at this stage – **TONY BENNETT** doing the honours – then came a final contribution from **THE KINKS**, who pounded though "Tired Of Waiting" and "You Really Got Me" in terrific style, a great closing act!

It was a big, brash, belting show, loaded with names and loaded with talent.

Truly, the biggest array of pop stars ever assembled on one great day.

AND ALSO IN APRIL, 1965

Eighteen-year-old spinster of this parish Miss **MARIANNE FAITHFULL**, who is to marry student suitor John Dunbar in June, reveals both her personal and professional ambitions to *NME*: "To live a long and happy life with my John" and "to know when to retire gracefully" . . . Tucking into an enormous plate of scampi and mushrooms with his faithful, space-cadet roadie Gypsy Dave at his side, **DONOVAN** casually announces that he is to quit the music scene in just two years time: "I think I could continue for much longer. But I've decided on a deadline of two years, then I intend to travel around the world and just write" . . . As a bored **BOB DYLAN** slumps slovenly into the salubrious surroundings of his suite at London's Savoy Hotel, he unassumingly drawls, "I don't give the impression of being a star, because I don't think of myself as one. I've sat back and seen all these crazes come and go, and I don't think I'm more than a craze. In a coupla years time, I shall be right back where I started – an unknown" . . . Following on from the enormous Stateside success of all things Merseybeat, a trio of Mancunian artists step stridently into the spotlight. The top three positions in the Billboard charts are held by **WAYNE FONTANA & THE MINDBENDERS**, **HERMAN'S HERMITS** and **FREDDIE & THE DREAMERS** . . . No such luck for **SANDIE SHAW**, however, who has again been refused a work permit for the United States. The unfortunate chanteuse has been deemed "of not sufficiently distinguished ability" by the faceless powers that be . . . As Motown front-runners **THE SUPREMES** fly into the UK, lead vocalist **DIANA ROSS** reinforces her lifelong commitment to the group by telling *Melody Maker*, "I have never thought of singing solo. Lots of people have put this question to me, but I don't think that I would ever leave the girls. They love me and I love them so much, and if we broke up, it would only be if any of us got married. Then I might sing on my own" . . . Since incautiously splitting his strides during his last concert tour two months ago, velvet-suited crooner **PJ PROBY** has been banned from both the Rank and ABC theatre chains, as well as ABC-TV and Rediffusion (producers of *Thank Your Lucky Stars* and *Ready Steady Go!*, respectively). *Melody Maker* asks Proby's fellow performers, "Has he suffered enough?", and is almost unanimously answered in the affirmative. **TOM JONES** "cannot understand this stupid TV attitude", **DUSTY SPRINGFIELD** reckons that "what PJ does doesn't go beyond any reasonable bounds of decency", and **JOHN LENNON** declares, "Television bans like this are a stupid load of crap." The only voice of outraged dissent comes from newcomer **ELKIE BROOKS:** "I can't see what all the fuss is about over a terrible act. Keep Proby off TV" . . . **THE YARDBIRDS'** rhythm guitarist, **CHRIS DREJA**, tells how the band's choice of **GRAHAM GOULDMAN**'s "For Your Love" as their latest single caused an irreconcilable split with their former blues purist axeman, **ERIC CLAPTON**. "Things came to a head. Eric really had a hate against 'For Your Love'. He said it wouldn't mean a thing if it was released. So he left the group about a month ago. Now we have got **GEOFF** *(sic)* **BECK** instead. Some people say that Geoff looks a bit like Mick Jagger. It doesn't mean anything. We chose him for his musical ability, not his looks" . . . "Wacky" *NME* Poll-winning **DJ JIMMY SAVILE** tells the paper that the biggest break of his career was the "second toe on left foot after first professional wrestling match", and admits that his biggest disappointment is "not being knighted" . . . **RAY DAVIES**, *NME*'s "Kink Of The Week", is a "highly sensitive composition of nervous energy and disciplined emotion. He talks very softly and earnestly. About himself he says: 'I'm a collection of loose ends. I don't want to be a pop star. I think that this is just a part of my life which will come to an end'" . . .

CHART FACT

Shepherd's Bush mod quartet **THE WHO**'s first single, "I Can't Explain", finally reached the Top 10, but it was far from an overnight success. On its original release, back in January, *NME* called it "a pounding shuffle-shaker, with surf-like counter-harmonies behind the main lyric. It's insidious and insistent, with an arresting backing – a sort of blend of Merseybeat and surfing! Keep your eye on this one."

Initial sales in London were strong – the band were playing a residency at the Marquee's Tuesday night Maximum R'n'B club – but it was not until a belated appearance on *Ready Steady Go!* that it finally crept chartwards.

Keen to duplicate the riff-heavy sound of The Kinks' "You Really Got Me", the band's management (Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp) signed up Kinks producer Shel Talmy. Unhappy with early demos of the song, Talmy brought in a young session player to provide lead guitar muscle, one Jimmy Page. A highly miffed Pete Townshend however, immediately insisted on re-recording Page's guitar contribution himself.

Pictorial Press

The Supremes: never say never, Di

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

NME TOP THIRTY

FIRST-EVER CHART IN BRITAIN —AND STILL THE FIRST TODAY!

(Wednesday, April 7, 1965)

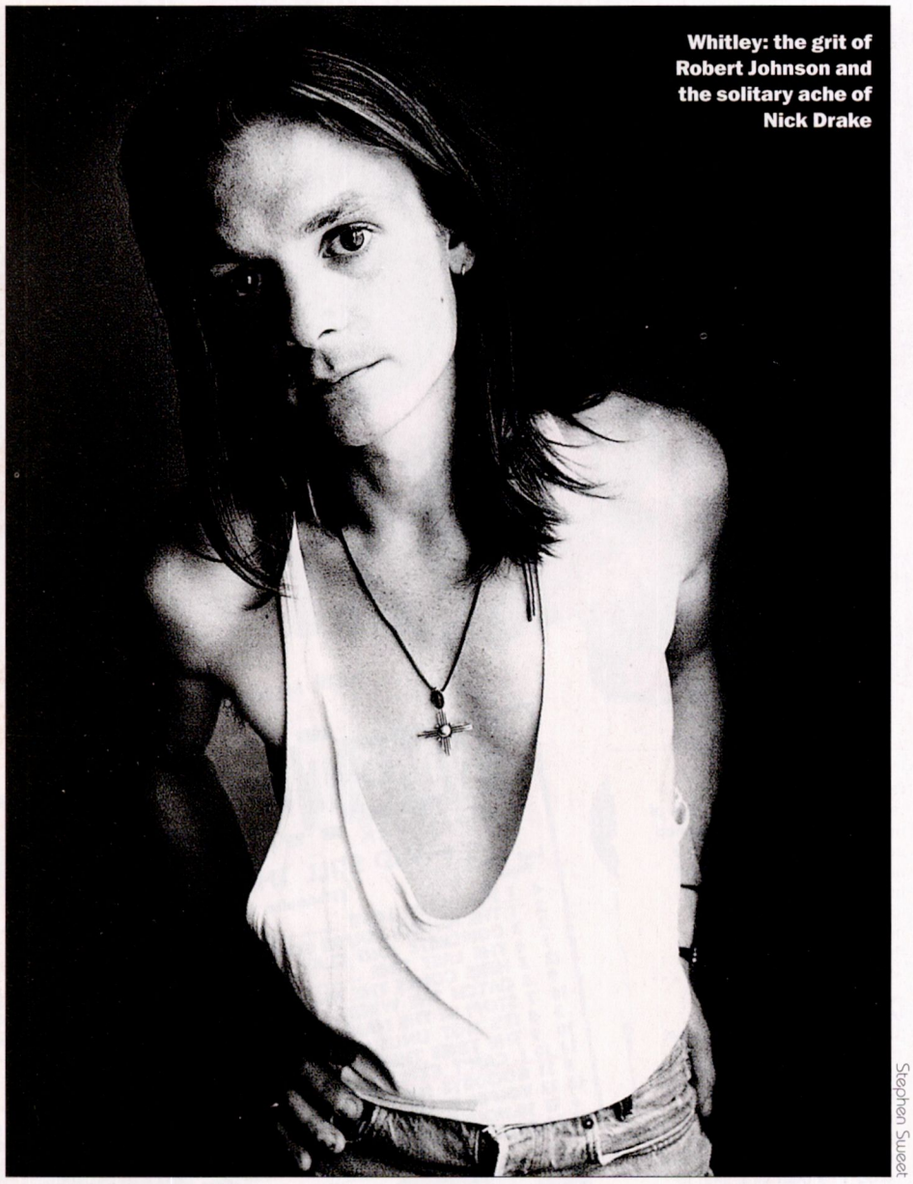
Last This Week			Highest Position	Weeks in Chart
4	1	FOR YOUR LOVE ..... Yardbirds (Columbia)	5	1
3	1	THE MINUTE YOU'RE GONE ..... Cliff Richard (Columbia)	5	1
2	3	CONCRETE AND CLAY ..... Unit 4 Plus 2 (Decca)	6	2
1	4	THE LAST TIME ..... Rolling Stones (Decca)	6	1
12	5	HERE COMES THE NIGHT ..... Them (Decca)	3	5
9	6	CATCH THE WIND ..... Donovan (Pye)	4	6
16	7	STOP! IN THE NAME OF LOVE Supremes (Tamla-Motown)	3	7
5	8	IT'S NOT UNUSUAL ..... Tom Jones (Decca)	9	1
10	9	THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' ... Bob Dylan (CBS)	3	9
14	10	I CAN'T EXPLAIN ..... The Who (Brunswick)	4	10
8	11	GOODBYE MY LOVE ..... Searchers (Pye)		
15	12	YOU'RE BREAKING MY HEART ..... Keely Smith (Pye)		
6	12	SILHOUETTES ..... Herman's Hermits		
7	14	COME AND STAY WITH ME ... Marianne		

Redferns

The Who: are you being surfed?

by David Fricke

Whitley's dirty blues



Whitley: the grit of Robert Johnson and the solitary ache of Nick Drake

Stephen Sweet

THE FIRST "Best Album" Of 1998: After a critically applauded but commercially uneven tenure at Columbia Records, the maverick-blues singer and guitarist, **CHRIS WHITLEY**, has made a career-defining record of solo, single-take dynamite entitled *Dirt Floor*, featuring just Whitley's voice and the gritty, glass-fingered skid of his National steel guitar, and recorded in one day for a mere pittance: $1,500. And the album's producer/engineer, **CRAIG STREET**, says most of that money went for truck rental, to get the recording gear from New York City up to Whitley's father's farm in Vermont.

"We set the gear up in the kitchen and Chris was in his father's workshop," says Street, whose production *resumé* includes acclaimed records by Cassandra Wilson, Jimmy Scott and kd lang. "Chris sang into a microphone hanging from a piece of baling wire." Whitley and Street recorded from 11 in the morning until 11 that night, taking a single break for pizza. The next day, they sequenced the material and ran off CD-reference copies.

The result, clocking in at a taut, pithy nine songs and 27 minutes, combines the gritty traditionalism of Robert Johnson's 1936 hotel-room sessions with the Zen-like confessional tension and solitary ache of Nick Drake's *Pink Moon*. Street says that one of the highest, early compliments he's received of the record came from the black critic and essayist, Greg Tate, who said that Whitley sounded like "the blackest white man I know".

Dirt Floor comes out in February on the small New York-based label, Messenger Records.

Look out for it.

OAR In The Water: Missing in action since he blew his mind out at the turn of the Seventies on a mad diet of super-powered hallucinogenics and dark fantasies, **MOBY GRAPE** singer, guitarist, songwriter and acid-rock visionary **SKIP SPENCE** is to be honoured in absentia with a forthcoming underground, all-star tribute album. Entitled *More Oar: A Tribute to Alexander "Skip" Spence*, the record will feature covers of the 12 songs recorded by Spence for his 1969 post-Grape solo album, *Oar*. Acts already committed to the project include **FLYING SAUCER ATTACK, WILCO, MUDHONEY, ROBYN HITCHCOCK, SON VOLT, THE FLAMING LIPS, SCREAMING TREES' MARK LANEGAN**, legendary Memphis producer **JIM DICKINSON**, and singer-guitarist **ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO.**

Bill Bentley, a publicity executive at Warner Bros Records in Los Angeles who conceived the project and has been pulling it together for nearly two years, said that he decided to focus on Spence's strange, haunting solo material, as opposed to the latter's Grape classics like "Omaha".

"It's a great concept," says Bentley, who was the driving force between the Roky Erickson tribute disc, *Where the Pyramid Meets the Eye*, "and this way Skip will get the money. Matthew Katz [Moby Grape's original manager] never had the rights to his solo publishing." All of the publishing proceeds from *More Oar* will go direct to Spence, who is currently living on public assistance in California.

More Oar is planned for release in the autumn of this year on the independent Birdman label. The cover will be a portrait of Spence executed by the acclaimed Grateful Dead poster artist, Stanley Mouse.

MORE Mud In Your Ear: In addition to saluting **SKIP SPENCE** on record, **MUDHONEY** and **JIM DICKINSON** are currently holed up in Seattle cutting a new 'Honey album for Warner Bros, the group's seventh for the label. Dickinson who produced Big Star's legendary third album and played piano on The Rolling Stones' *Sticky Fingers* – and the band are working at Studio Litho, the studio owned by Pearl Jam's Stone Gossard, for a planned July release. With the Seattle grunge explosion of the early Nineties now in almost total eclipse, Mudhoney are actually poised to make what may well be the best record of their lively, if arduous, career. The group's new material is said to be rough, righteous stuff and hard-edged but with a melodic and physical focus that has often eluded the 'Honey on record. And remember this: It was Dickinson who produced The Replacements' brilliant and enduring 1987 album, *Pleased To Meet Me*.

GREAT Bad Ideas Of Our Time: This spring, **ELVIS PRESLEY** embarks on his first US concert tour – since his death in 1977. In what may be the most bizarre, hopelessly delusional twist yet in posthumous Elvismania, **GRACELAND/ELVIS PRESLEY ENTERPRISES, INC** – the official commercial executors of the King's legacy – is combining vintage concert footage of the singer with live musical and background vocal accompaniment in a travelling arena presentation disingenuously titled *Elvis – The Concert*. Bona fide Elvis session and road-band veterans such as guitarists James Burton and Glen D Hardin, and female harmonisers The Sweet Inspirations will perform in sync with film and video of actual Seventies Presley concerts, with all but Presley's voice removed from the soundtrack. A one-off version of the show was put on in Memphis last August on the 20th anniversary of Presley's passing. EPE's Todd Morgan, who created the concept, claims, "It's like he's really back in the building." No, it's not.

THE VOICE Of Sacrifice: Of the many Native American performers who made vocal and musical contributions to **ROBBIE ROBERTSON'S** new concept record, *Contact From The Underworld Of Red Boy*, the only guest who literally phoned his part in was imprisoned Indian leader **LEONARD PELTIER**, who has been in Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary since 1976. Peltier, convicted of the murder of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, has long been a protest-movement icon and a hero to left-wing rock activists such as **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE.** His case and the US government's questionable prosecution of the charges against him have been the subject of multiple books, films and TV documentaries. But Peltier's appearance on Robertson's album – a dynamic blend of techno-dance ambience, traditional Indian song and mythic-Americana lyricism featuring production contributions from U2 collaborator **HOWIE B** – marks a rare opportunity for Peltier to speak publicly in his own defence.

Robertson, who is of Mohawk descent and spent much of his youth on the Six Nations Reservation in Canada, had spoken to Peltier often on the phone from Leavenworth. But for "Sacrifice", a spectral piece of music on *Red Boy* combining electronic programming and Indian flute and drumming, Robertson taped an extended soliloquy by Peltier on his life and plight. "He's such an amazing soul of a person, coming through the wire," Robertson says. "I asked him, 'Just start at the beginning, tell me your name and what happened.' So he just told me the story, in his humble way. And I said, the world has to hear this. I have to share this with people. It really works – the sound of him coming through the phone." *Contact From the Underworld of Red Boy*, Robertson's first release since the 1994 TV-soundtrack project, *Music For "The Native Americans"*, is also a TV companion piece.

The new album will be quickly followed by the public-television broadcast of *Robbie Robertson: Making a Noise*, a documentary inspired by Robertson's return to the Six Nations Reservation in 1996.

"This time," he says, "a film was made to go with the music."

by Chris Roberts

KRISTIN HERSH

Leader of the now defunct Boston-based Throwing Muses, who released six highly acclaimed albums from 1986 to 1995 – *Throwing Muses*, *House Tornado*, *Hunkpapa*, *The Real Ramona*, *Red Heaven* and *University* – she has recorded one previous solo album, on which Michael Stipe guested, called *Hips And Makers* (1994)

John Patrick

Is it true you've just survived a blizzard in Madrid?
"We've been praying for snow every time we've been to Europe, but no joy. Then we're there for the most snow Madrid's had in like 90 years. It was awesome: palm trees covered in snow are beautiful. The Spaniards were all having slush fights. These are people who do not own coats."

You live in the Californian desert?
"Yeah, where it snowed at Easter, actually. But enough about snow. It's green, there are moonscape-like, wacky-looking rock piles everywhere, and millions of cacti with colours ranging from red to purple to orange. It's a crazy place: coyotes, rattlesnakes, mountain lions, bears."

Isn't it scary living among snakes?
"Scary? Yeah, probably, but I'm not too bright. I tried to bond with the birds, thinking tweet tweet, how nice, and put food out for them. But hundreds of big, wild, insane, vulture-style birds descended on me like a Hitchcock scene so I dropped all the seeds and ran away. I *love* snakes, however. As a kid I grew up with snake books, memorised all the different kinds. So did my husband, coincidentally. So we have no intrinsic fear of snakes. It's the little baby ones who can kill you, cos they don't know better than to pump all their poison into you. I'm no snake-charmer, no, but squirrels come to me. Rodents of all kinds!"

Did you ever finish the documentary you were making about ostriches?
"We left it in the final stages of editing: we thought when we stop having kids we'll get round to finishing it. People seem to want to play it in their movie houses."

Do you intentionally give all your sons profoundly American names?
"Not in a nationalistic way. But I do feel American in that that's all I know. And I only know that because I've travelled so much and everywhere else seems foreign. After Dylan and Ryder, I *had* to give my third child a five-letter name with Y as the second letter, so it was Wyatt. You have to wade through a mire of sounds before you decide you can call your offspring one of them. We just happened to end up with three little cowboys."

If Throwing Muses ended because you couldn't make a living from it, does this mean your solo career pays better?
"It just means I can tour in a car, with two guitars and no other musicians to pay, and I get paid the same as ever. With the Muses we were all 30, even the boys were wanting to start families – and despite me giving up my salary years ago so the others could get paid something, we still didn't have enough. They were so nice to hold me up to play my songs for all those years. We were all still in love with the songs and with each other: it didn't feel like breaking up, cos that implies fighting. We played a goodbye show at The Whiskey in LA and it felt like attending our own funeral. I still adore everyone who was ever in the band."

'If my songs only appealed to straight white females, I'd be bombed. I'd fire myself'

Do songs come to you in a different way now?
"My reaction to them is different. I don't let them fuck with me any more. That was being irresponsible as a parent and a wife. I decided to be as healthy and clear-sighted as possible. I can't stop the songs so I won't try to. They come out beautifully cos I have nothing to do with them. It's a little bit Zen."

You've been called "pathologically modest". Fair comment?
"Maybe my *description* of inspiration is freakier than it is, but it's still freaky. I hear my songs as if someone's playing a record in the next room, and one instrument is the syllables.

"All I do is copy it down. And because I have so many children I've started not writing them down – just keeping them in my head – until the studio. I don't have time to play guitar much now, which might sound like a bad professional problem, but it also means the songs aren't frozen at a certain stage of evolution."

How did Joe Henry come to produce your new album, *Strange Angels*?
"Our families are close: his wife's a manager, as is my husband, and our children are best friends. I was thinking of recording myself at home; Joe said come over to mine and I'll punch the buttons, it'll be even more direct. And as a songwriter himself, he didn't need to be walked through the process. I had all kinds of plans to ask Giant Sand and Lisa Germano to play on the record, but after I'd finished we already had to pull half my stuff off it. It's a teeny-tiny, quiet little album. This time I know what I'm doing and I'm still supposed to be doing not very much. The songs are best left alone."

Why the title *Strange Angels*?
"I don't like naming records. I wanted to call it *Swim With The Monkey* but my husband said, 'You're not in a rock band any more,' and suggested *Strange Angels*, another quote from a lyric. It sounds like a fruity name for a record to me but I trust him. The stranger the angel, the bigger the life-lesson: children, songs, blessings in disguise, twisted surprises."

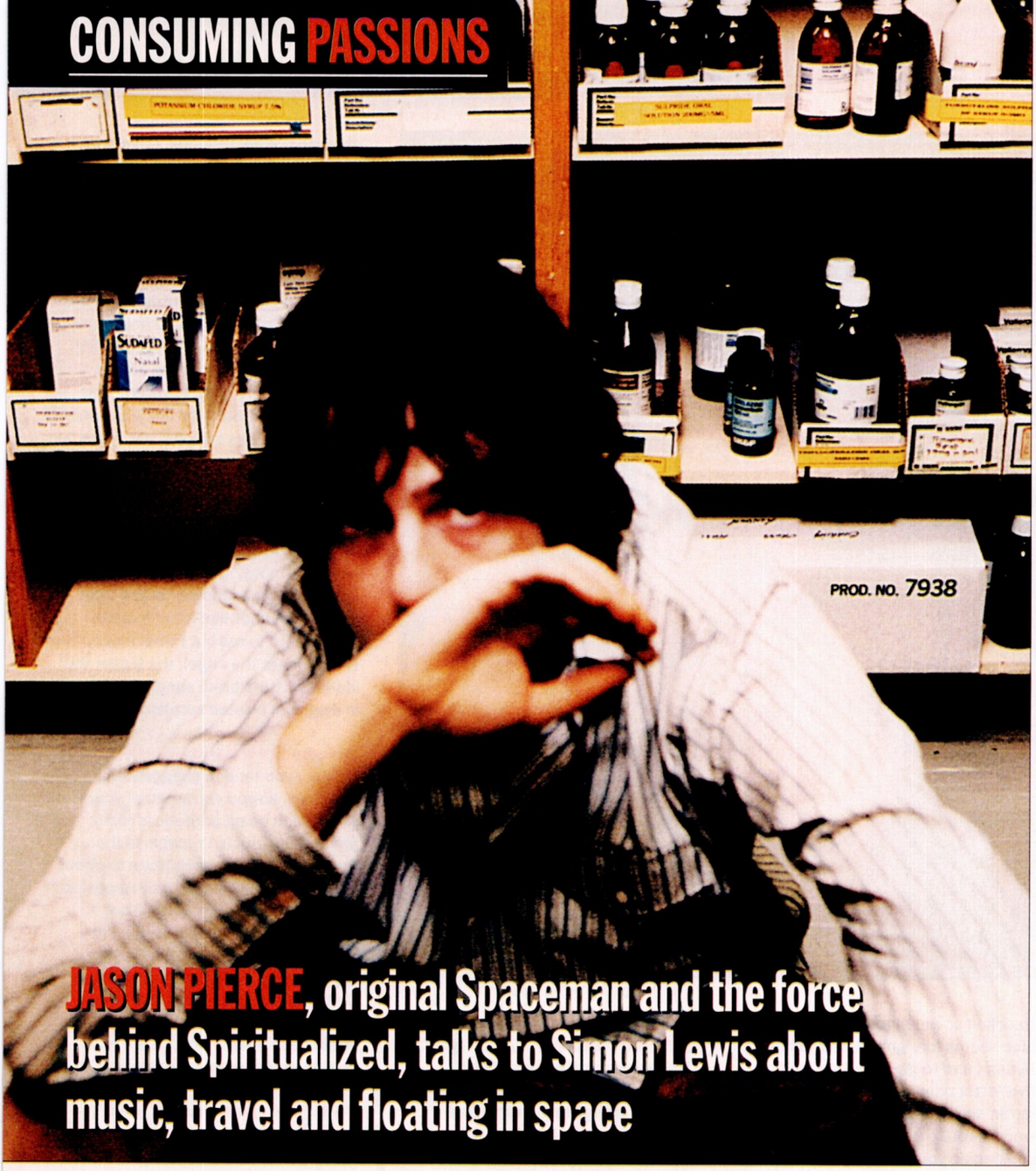
Are some of the lyrics self-critical?
"Yes . . . you tend to exaggerate a tendency, so you can laugh at yourself. I think being pathetic is really funny – like, ouch, I recognise that. Songs don't always celebrate the best sides of us. If my songs only appealed to straight white females, I'd be bombed, I'd fire myself. I hope I'm writing from the part of me that's gay, straight, male, female, whatever. Certainly it's not all from 'my' perspective. Men are good at being feminine in music: women are just getting round to being masculine."

So did you "understand" your own songs?
"Sometimes I think I come across crazy, or a nymphomaniac, or I just plain disagree with them. Once it's on record there's not much I can do. Everyone thinks I'm crazy anyway, so what's to lose? I'm only offended when I'm grouped with those who glamorise emotional instability or mental illness. I've spent my entire career trying to look healthy, and believe me I'm healthier than 90 per cent of the other people on the bus."

Is playing live alone euphoric or exhausting?
"It's like: I miss my friends. I'm not a show-off, I'm too shy for this job. Except I *am* good at disappearing, and it's easier to disappear when you're not thinking about cueing other musicians. I don't even have to have a set-list now. The songs are like very nice people: they come in, I spend time with them, they go . . . the whole thing's about as exhausting as a party where you like everyone that comes."

Kristin Hersh's second solo album, Strange Angels, is released on 4AD on February 2

CONSUMING PASSIONS



JASON PIERCE, original Spaceman and the force behind Spiritualized, talks to Simon Lewis about music, travel and floating in space

TRAVEL

"We could never afford to go on holiday when I was a kid, so I appreciate being able to travel in bands and I never really stop moving around, I'm sort of rootless. After we tour America, I usually go round again on my own and stay with all the people we've met. Somewhere like Chicago, where we've been eight times, there's a whole group of people we know, friends of friends, bands like Tortoise, fans who've come up to us after a gig and got to know us.

"I think travel is more about people than places. I mean, I love fast towns like London and New York, but there's places like Memphis, which is part of the 'rust belt', this big strip of decaying towns down the middle of America, and it's got its own character and people."

THE BLUES

"I'm not from a musical background but I had a friend who would make me these tapes off the radio, John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, Blind Willie McTell – it just sounded so raw and alien to me. That's the sound I was looking for when I started getting into bands like The Cramps and The Fleshtones at the end of the Seventies, a kind of rockabilly psychedelic blues. I never liked the flowery, West Coast hippy bands like Jefferson Airplane – I was interested in bands like Thirteenth Floor Elevators and MC5 who took the idea from the Stones of doing dark blues, but just chewed loads of acid."

GOSPEL

"The first gospel I heard was The Staple Singers on one of those tapes, but I think Sam Cooke as a gospel singer was incredibly important – he predates everyone else by 10 years. He was the blueprint for everyone from Otis Redding to Rod Stewart. Play 'A Change Is Gonna Come' and just listen to his voice. I started to see the link between all these different sorts of music, all going back to the energy of gospel. James Brown could be a blueprint for The Stooges with horns instead of guitar riffs, Sam Cooke's *Live At The Harlem Square Club* sounds like an MC5 record. Musicians do draw these lines – MC5 knew where Sun Ra was coming from. They used his lyrics for 'Starship' on *Kick Out The Jams*. They gave him a writing credit on the album."

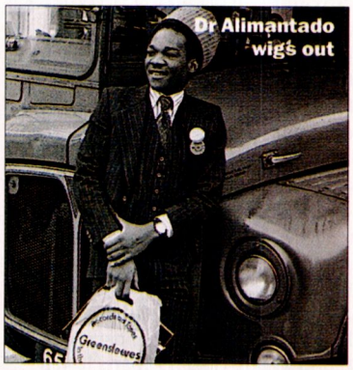
Sam Cooke: sounds like MC5

JAZZ

"There's that kind of jazz where people applaud the solos, all the snobbery to do with understanding sevenths and ninths and 17/4 time. I don't think you should need a musicology degree to enjoy music. Some of those *avant garde* people are genius, but a lot of them are just blowing air around. I was into Sun Ra for ages because of MC5, but the first serious jazz album I bought was *The Individualism Of Gil Evans*, which really stood out – all his stuff still does – because it's not normal jazz instrumentation. French horn, English horn, tubas, it's beautifully orchestrated and unique to him."

JUNGLE

"I used to hear primitive jungle back in the early Nineties and loved its rawness, like early hip hop. John Coxon of Springheel Jack let us use his studio for Pure Phase, he mixed a lot of the album, and he played me a lot of jungle. I love the way it moves on so quickly – you can make up a tape and listen to it for a few months, then the next time you go to a club there's a whole new set of sounds. What people like Optical and Aphrodite are doing this year is really intense. I think a lot of people who don't get jungle need to hear it live in a club to understand it."


Dr Alimantado 'wigs out

JAMAICA

"Ska started off as copies of Motown, but people like Lee Perry developed this sound that was like nothing else on earth. The first record like that I heard was Dr Alimantado's 'Best Dressed Chicken In Town', and I thought it was so wigged out. I never liked the idea of lying around stoned listening to dub in someone's room, but I was fascinated with the psychedelic production, the way Lee Perry would record a tap dripping at the back of Black Ark and mix that in. You should get the *History Of Jamaican Music* box set on Island. Some modern Jamaican music is so weird – weird sounds, broken beatboxes, sort of toy noises – it's unlike anything else."

SCIENCE

"I'm empirical. Some people think that music is mystical, that you're just the conduit for this gift. But I think writing a song is more about science. There's that thing about a thousand monkeys producing the works of Shakespeare in a thousand years, but I think three monkeys working for two years would come up with what Spiritualized do. We're not gifted, we just push ourselves. I think other people are too easily impressed when they achieve one good sound and the press instantly jumps up on their laps, so they don't push it any further.

"I also have this theory that music is evolutionary, that it adapts to its environment just like an organism. So you get rapid change somewhere like London, but something like Tibetan flute music will remain unchanged for hundreds of years.

"I get a lot of inspiration from books. One line in *Sophie's World* inspired the whole of *Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space*.

"I read a lot about science, evolution and the mind when we're on tour – Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins – not to impress anyone, just out of personal curiosity. I've got no religious faith, so I'm looking for . . . evidence, I suppose."

Spiritualized's latest single, 'Think I'm In Love', is out now on Dedicated

BREITLING
1884

AVIASTAR

Matching the instant legibility of today's cockpit instruments, the AVIASTAR mechanical chronograph features a black and white dial that's easy to read day and night under all circumstances.
Its NAVITIMER-type case recalls the heyday of the Lockheed Constellation, the airliner that set the stage for today's non-stop transoceanic flights.

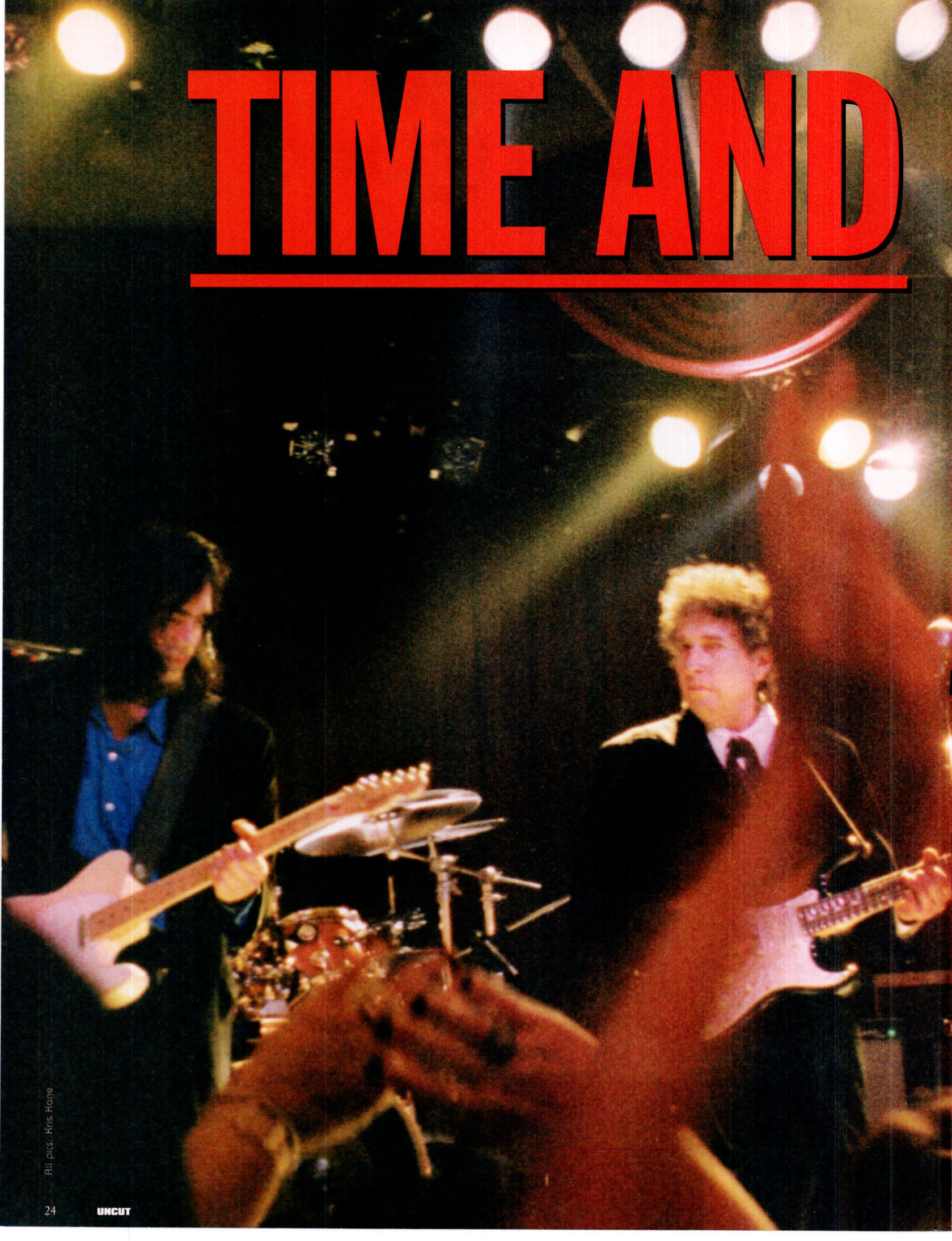
Mechanical chronograph

The easy-to-operate AVIASTAR chronograph is a professionally designed wrist instrument measuring times from 1/5th second to 12 hours including, when needed, intermediate and cumulative flying times. Available in steel, with leather strap or choice of NAVITIMER or PILOT bracelet.

AVAILABLE FROM SELECTED JEWELLERS THROUGHOUT GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.
FOR YOUR NEAREST STOCKIST TELEPHONE 0171 637 5167

INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

TIME AND



All pics: Kris Kane

TIME AGAIN

***Time Out Of Mind* was Bob Dylan's most critically and commercially successful album in years. Most people took it as a Last Testament, Dylan haunted by images of death and estrangement, the work of a troubled, unhappy man facing up to his own mortality. After seeing five consecutive shows by Dylan and his new band at LA's El Rey Theatre, legendary American rock writer Paul Williams argues that far from being at the end of his tether, Dylan has never, in fact, been happier**

"Oh honey, even after all these years, you're still the one!"
– Bob Dylan, "Can't Wait", December 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, 1997, El Rey Theatre, Los Angeles

FOR THE MAN WHO ONCE TOLD US "DON'T look back", which of course we all took as instructions on How To Be Cool, 1997 was one hell of a year to look back on.

He got paid good money to play a few songs for the Pope. His first album of new songs in seven years was an immediate commercial and critical success (Best-Of-The-Year on most lists, Grammy-nominated, his first gold record since 1984), after decades of a frustrating, predictable indifference to every new album from both the press and the public. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature, and rumoured to have a good chance of getting it if he can just wait (stay alive) a few more years. President Clinton presented him with a Kennedy Center Lifetime Achievement Award (especially sweet because he received it along with one of his own heroes, his friend, Lauren Bacall). He also received the prestigious Lillian And Dorothy Gish Award (he expressed regret that he "never had a chance to appear in a movie with Lillian Gish").

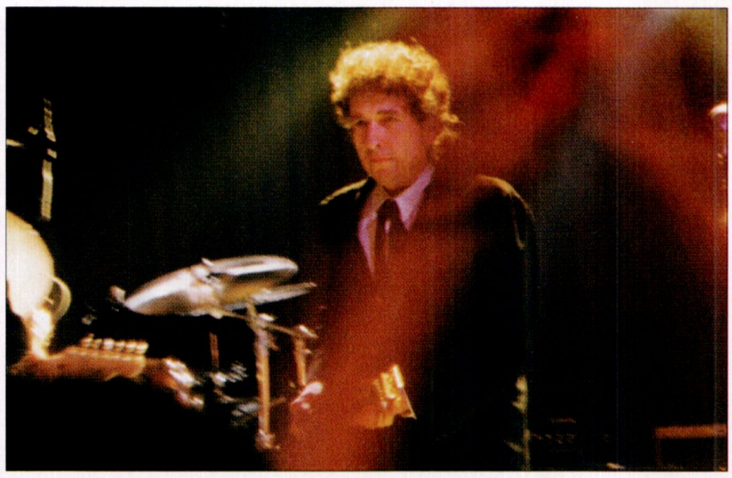
And *Newsweek* put him on the cover – a kind of American coronation – for the first time since 1974, partly in response to a brief death scare that got tremendous press and recharged his celebrity standing around the world.

But the really interesting story is not that these things happened, but rather how the old curmudgeon responded to them. That's something I hoped to find out – and did find out – by standing in the audience for five nights of Bob Dylan performances (with his most polished band ever) in a relatively small venue (900-person capacity, no seats except in the tiny VIP section/balcony) in his sorta hometown, Los Angeles, mid-December, 1997. The end of a seven-city "club tour" celebrating (very atypical of Dylan) his new album . . . and his last five shows of the year. Sold out, star-studded (*all* his unan-

nounced opening acts were million-selling recording artists), and most important of all (to the headliner, and to this reporter), the music sounded great. They were five fabulous nights.

HIGH POINTS? THERE WERE MANY. TWO THAT particularly stand out for me came in the middle of the second show at the El Rey, Wednesday night, December 17. When he started singing "Blind Willie McTell" (1983, one of his all-time-greatest songs, and one he'd never performed live until 1997), I got tears in my eyes. It wasn't just that it sounded good (which it did, the new arrangement is terrific, though of course no match for the solo piano performance of the officially released version). It was an overwhelming sense of the power of this moment.

Bob Dylan is barely 50-feet away from me, singing possibly the greatest tribute to "the singer" (any singer) ever written by an American songwriter or poet. *"I know one thing, nobody can sing the blues like Blind Willie McTell,"* Dylan sings in a slightly-modified wording in this '97 version.



Just before this performance, however, came the single most ecstatic musical moment (for me) of the five shows: a version of "White Dove" by Carter Stanley – the only "cover" song performed outside of the acoustic set over the five nights. Dylan's *Time Out Of Mind*, is, among other things, a very deliberate and extremely knowledgeable tribute to American roots music, folk, blues, folk-country, R'n'B. By singing "White Dove" with his new guitar player, Larry Campbell, one of the relatively few full vocal duets Dylan has done with a male singer in his entire career, Dylan made a remarkably soulful statement about his love of music and his sense of time and place (rural USA, mid-20th century, that's where he comes from). People tend to think of bluegrass in terms of banjos and fiddles, but Bob Dylan is aware that there is also a bluegrass vocal style, defined largely by the great early records of The Stanley Brothers. "White Dove" was their first single, in 1949. Almost 50 years later, Wednesday night, the song was spine-tingling. *"White dove will mourn in sorrow/The willows will hang their heads/Now that Mother and Daddy are dead."*

BEFORE TELLING YOU MORE ABOUT THE EL REY shows, however, I want to get to the other focus of this article, which is who Bob Dylan is at this moment in his life and our lives, as revealed on *Time Out Of Mind* and at these shows, and in a series of extraordinarily open and articulate interviews he has given in the past six months. Want to know who Bob Dylan really is at age 56? Listen. He'll tell you.

To start with, he's a happy man. This may seem an outrageous assertion to those who have listened casually to the lyrics of his new songs. *Time Out Of Mind* is the sort of record that is easily (mis)interpreted as a message of despair or decay (*"That's how it is, when things disintegrate"*) (*"Feel like I'm comin' to the end of my way . . ."*) (*"The party's over, and there's less and less to say"*) (*"Every nerve in my body is so vacant and numb"*).

Phew. If you were arguing with me about whether on the evidence of his most recent songs and interviews and shows, Bob Dylan is/is not a happy man, all you would have to do is quote these four lines from four different *Time Out Of Mind* songs, cross your arms, and rest your case.

If this were television, I'd have to defend my position with a snappy soundbite – maybe something about how singing the blues is often misunderstood as bitter misery when it can actually be the exact equivalent of "making a joyful noise unto the Lord".

Happily, I've been given space to stretch out a little here. So I can start – since Dylan's lyrics, memorable as even these new ones are, function not as soundbites (*"He who is not busy being born is busy dying!"*) but as components of songs and of musical performances – by placing each of these lines in the context of the verses and songs they're extracted from.

"CAN'T WAIT," THE GORGEOUS PENULTIMATE performance on *Time Out Of Mind* (and a song included at all five of the El Rey shows) is the source of the first quote. According to the original *Rolling Stone* review of the album, *Time* is "a self-portrait that pivots around a single line: *'That's how it is, when things disintegrate.'*" The reviewer doesn't note that this line occurs in a very specific context: the singer (who's the protagonist of the story) is *"tryin' to recover the sweet love"* he and the "you" of the song once had. And he is confessing his inability to handle the emotions her loss stirs in him: *"If I ever saw you comin', I don't know what I might do/I'd like to think I could control myself, but it isn't true/That's how it is, when things disintegrate."* What man or woman who's been through a separation could fail to identify with this story?

So is this whole album about Bob Dylan being horribly depressed right now?

Well, for one thing, the end of his marriage to the mother of his children occurred in 1977, which doesn't mean he can't use it as a source of song-material now, nor does it mean he hasn't been hit equally hard by some more recent romantic (or other-than-romantic) separation. But the text of the verse does make one thing inarguable: the kind of "thing" that is disintegrating in this line is a relationship. And more important, in rock'n'roll there's a context for every phrase that goes beyond lyrical context: the music, the performance as a whole. True, I've written two long books about Dylan's performances, and so you could say this is a hobby-horse of mine. But it doesn't take an expert to note that the "feel" or musical (and vocal) mood of "Can't Wait" is one of relaxed humour. The singer is laconic, witty and charming.

OK, it isn't 1966 and he isn't saying, *"Oh, Mama, can this really be the end?"*, but this music and this vocal performance are almost as likely to bring a smile to the listener's face. Or even, as you listen more than once, a grin. Feels good. You mean to tell me this is the voice – and musical creation – of an unhappy man? He probably has his low moments like all the rest of us, but when he's singing this song he sounds like a sly dog.

THE SECOND QUOTE IS FROM "'TIL I FELL IN Love With You," another song Dylan and his band played every night at the El Rey, and another song about a person suffering extravagantly because of love and separation. This one, admittedly, has a rather desperate (and very colourful) musical feel, very different from the relaxed humour of "Can't Wait". This is more like hysterical hilarity. But the contextual kicker this time is in the line that follows the quoted line. The whole verse reads: *"Well, my house is on fire, burnin' to the sky/Well, I thought it would rain, but the clouds passed by/And I feel like I'm comin' to the end of my way/But I know God is my shield and He won't lead me astray."* Still, he doesn't know what he's gonna do, but the wittiness of the chorus is reassuring.

Dylan no doubt has suffered in his life, as an artist is supposed to . . . but he also is clearly having a lot of fun writing and singing these lines, telling these musical stories with a pithiness that John Lennon was very glad to have achieved a few times.

THE THIRD QUOTE IS FROM "HIGHLANDS". (I'VE just heard that the long-rumoured video Dylan made for this 16-minute song can now be downloaded free from his Website, bobdylan.com. Welcome to the 21st century.) The context this time, I must say, does (very arguably) consciously tease the listener into believing Dylan is talking about his own career. This is almost the only song on the album that isn't directly sung to, or about, a woman that the singer/protagonist evidently loved and lost. The comic supporting actress in this epic, the Bostonian waitress, is not that woman. This is not inside information; it should be evident to anyone who listens to the whole album. The work of art doesn't need a key; it explains itself.

Anyway, the line I quoted above, *"The party's over, and there's less and less to say,"* is in a part of the song that isn't narrative and comes across as a

more universal and timeless voice than the voice of the jilted lover of "Can't Wait" and "'Til I Fell In Love With You". This is the voice of the protagonist, so to speak, of "Mr Tambourine Man", a guy who's stepped outside the limitations of time. So, it's in the context of this charming voice that croons the opening and closing segments of "Highlands" that we hear these lines that seem time-based and very applicable to the real lifetime of Bob Dylan as we know it (he knows we have to hear it this way; he's teasing us): *"The sun is beginnin' to shine on me/But it's not like the sun that used to be/The party's over, and there's less and less to say."*

So, you know what? Even though I don't like to admit to myself that I'm a Boomer (Bob Dylan isn't; he was born in 1941), I can't help but hear *"the party's over"* as being not so much a reflection on the speaker's own life, as the Voice Of A Generation speaking once again for that generation.

The party that's over is the Sixties, and all that we understood that to mean. He's right. There is less and less to say in, for example, rock'n'roll, or pop music. The Beatles today would very likely be drawing blanks, because the times have changed and what people were interested in listening to when they rushed out to buy the latest Beatles or Bob Dylan records, people are not so open to today. There's definitely less and less to say when you don't feel someone's listening. Which doesn't have to be considered a personal failure. *"The party's over"* could just be an acknowledgment that the times have indeed changed. And is Bob Dylan unhappy about that? Well, he might be, or he might be laughing at you for asking, because he knows he doesn't give a damn.

THE FOURTH QUOTE, "EVERY NERVE IN MY BODY is so vacant and numb," is from "Not Dark Yet". We're all afraid of death, so the very chorus of this song – *"It's not dark yet, but it's getting there"* – is spooky, confrontational, unsettling for most listeners. *Touché*, Bob! So, should the fact that he has the courage to talk and sing about such a subject be taken as an indication that he's less happy than the rest of us? More grounded in his happiness, more honest with himself, seems a more likely possibility.

"Do not go gentle into that good night," the other Dylan famously beseeched us. But "Not Dark Yet" is a remarkably gentle song. The kindness of its pace (and of the singer's voice) is almost hypnotic. I know people who've found themselves listening to this one song every day for weeks or more. Not just because they like to be unsettled, I think. Probably because it's a deeply moving performance, and somehow quite comforting.

The second line of Dylan Thomas' poem is *"Old age should burn and rave at close of day"*. There's a lot of burning and raving in these *Time* songs. That shouldn't be taken to mean (Bob) Dylan is obsessed with old age. Rather, the masterful poet is having fun playing with the feelings and images the subject evokes in him, and in his listeners. And as always with this particular master poet, every good phrase has the ability to serve a variety of purposes, can be heard dozens of stimulating ways by different listeners or by the same listener at different times. *"Every nerve in my body is so vacant and numb/I can't even remember what it was I came here to get away from,"* is a fabulous couplet, worthy of Pope (Alexander, not John Paul).

The second half evokes the cliché about men in the French Foreign Legion, who joined to forget someone or something. In the same way it evokes clichés about men, or women, in pubs or bars. Which, if we hear the speaker as someone drinking to forget, would explain why his nerves are numb. Funny. Name two or three other auteurs currently writing in the English language who are as witty as this *Time Out Of Mind* Dylan. Woody Allen? Ken Campbell? Philip K Dick could have gotten a nod in this category before his light darkened. So should we hear the words of this album as some kind of gloomy news? Surely, it's more a case of *"laugh, laugh, in the face of the dying of the light"*.

SO, HAVE I GOTTEN ACROSS MY NOTION OF WHO Bob Dylan is at this moment in his life?

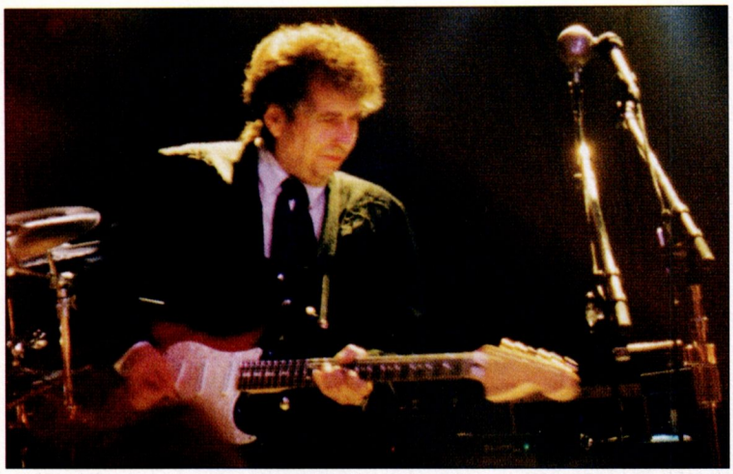
He's a person who's having a fabulous time doing what he does best – writing, recording, singing, playing shows for live audiences. And having the satisfaction of feeling and knowing that he's doing it as well as he ever has in his life and long career. That's a very happy person, from my point of view.

What makes this a particularly joyous moment in the life of Bob Dylan is not just that he's expressing himself with such gusto, and triumphantly attaining the secret and extremely high standards he sets for his own work. And being publicly acknowledged for it – the awards could be just for being "famous long ago", as he once put it; but the sales of and acclaim for *Time Out Of Mind* are here and now. It's that this comes after a long fallow period in some important respects.

True, he's made great albums fairly recently (*World Gone Wrong*, 1993), and his band through 1995 was as good as any he's ever played in. But 1997 was a year when he released an album that was both a better collection of new songs and a better-*sound*ing recording than lots of people, including him, thought he could ever achieve again. And though he's certainly had his share of public attention in the past decade, it hasn't been anything like that absolutely extraordinary public response his new music, his avant-garde art, received constantly in his mid-Sixties heyday.

About this last point . . . Dylan expressed anger and disappointment to close friends a few months after the release of *World Gone Wrong*. He knew how good this album was, and he'd even pulled a few tricks out of the closet – wrote Dylanesque liner notes for the first time in decades, came up with a cover much closer to his mid-Sixties aesthetic than any album sleeve since. He loved this record and wanted it to get its due. But then it came out and sold the exact same numbers as any record he ever puts out, good or indifferent . . . and the reviews, while favourable, weren't the kind of insane enthusiasm (or loud, angry, confused babbling) he'd always gotten in the Sixties.

My theory is he was "spoiled" by the almost impossibly responsive world that greeted his songs and albums and aesthetic persona when he was a young man. You get treated that absurdly well, you're gonna miss it when it's gone.



LET ME TELL YOU A QUICK ANECDOTE FROM THE El Rey shows that I think illustrates the kind of fun our man Bob has been having lately. Friday night, fourth show, after the fourth and final encore (the first two encores were the only times a guest musician appeared with Bob: Sheryl Crow sang with him and played guitar and then accordion on "Highway 61 Revisited" and "Knockin' On Heaven's Door") . . . anyway, Friday after the last encore Bob grabbed his bass player, Tony Garnier, and said something to him excitedly while pointing up at the little balcony VIP Section in the back of the room.

Bob was pointing out Gregory Peck, who'd been moving his leg and tapping his foot furiously all through "Rainy Day Women". What a moment for the co-author (with Sam Shepard) of "Brownsville Girl", on which Dylan sang: *"There was this movie I seen one time, about a man riding across the desert, and it starred Gregory Peck . . ."* Did that young man falling in love with the movies at his uncle's theatre in Hibbing ever dream that someday those figures on the screen would be watching *him* from the balcony of a similar theatre . . .?

Gregory Peck's other cameo appearance in what we might call "This Is Your Life, Bob Dylan, 1997!" came when he delivered the spoken (as opposed to sung) tribute to Bob at the Kennedy Center ceremony a few weeks before the El Rey shows. Peck said he thinks of Dylan as "a kind of 19th century troubadour, a maverick American spirit . . . in him we hear the echo of old American voices, Whitman and Mark Twain, blues singers, fiddlers and balladeers . . . Bob Dylan's voice reaches just as high and it will linger just as long." He could have been reviewing *Time Out Of Mind*!

Peck's description of Dylan's impact in the Sixties included the sentences: "He expanded the canvas. It was a restless reinvention of the music, album after album." That's exactly what the El Rey shows were. Night after night.

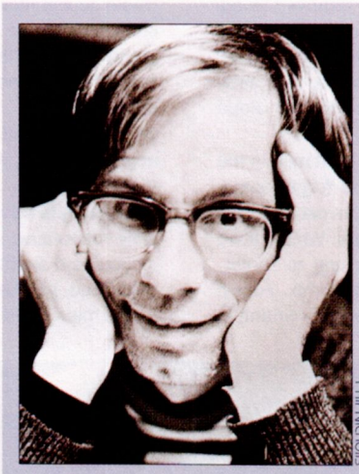
DYLAN STARTED 1997 BY REINVENTING HIS BAND, his instrument for expressing himself onstage. He broke in a new guitar player, Larry Campbell, six months after introducing a new drummer, David Kemper (who'd previously played in the Jerry Garcia Band). The other two band members in '97, and at the El Rey, were stalwarts: Bucky Baxter on pedal steel and mandolin, with Dylan since '92, and Tony Garnier on bass, with Dylan at every show he's played since 1989.

"Restless reinvention" is an excellent summation of Dylan's method as a performer, an artist. He plays with a band (he hasn't performed solo since 1965) because in his aesthetic, the creation of a sound and the dynamics between the elements of that sound are as important as any messages words can convey. His voice is important, of course. It's an instrument interacting with other instruments that must all play together at the moment when the art is created.

For *Time Out Of Mind*, Dylan took the very unusual step of giving a statement to the record company that they could quote in ads and on posters so he could speak directly to his audience: "Daniel [Lanois, *Time*'s producer] and I talked about these songs and how they should sound long before we recorded them. As for listeners, some people, when it comes to me, extrapolate only the lyrics from the music. But in this case, the music itself has just as far-reaching effect, and it was meant to be that way.

"It's definitely a performance record instead of a poetic literary type of thing. You can feel it rather than think about it."

You'd expect, therefore, more musical and sonic reinvention at the "club tour" shows, and that's what we got at the El Rey. As Dylan has done over the years, he had an outline, a basic structure that left lots of room for improvisation and spontaneity within that outline, that canvas. Sixteen songs a night, four of them from *Time Out Of Mind*, always the same four, serving as a kind of backbone for this set of performances, a starting point, a foundation to build each evening around. A statement the artist wants to make. Never mind that you were desperate to hear "Not Dark Yet" – this is the bandleader's show, *his* work of art, and he's not showcasing the album's "best" songs, but rather the ones that he senses will allow him to create and express what his muse asks of him this month, this moment).



Phil Nicholls

Paul Williams has been a fan of Bob Dylan since 1963, when he first saw him in concert. Often described as "the founding father of rock journalism", he started the first rock magazine, *Crawdaddy!*, as a teenager in 1966. He is the author of many books, including two on Dylan – *Bob Dylan: Performing Artist 1960-73 And 1974-86* and *Bob Dylan: Watching The River Flow*. Omnibus recently published his *Neil Young: Love To Burn* and *The Beach Boys: How Deep Is The Ocean?* His 1993 collection, *Rock And Roll: The 100 Best Singles*, is essential reading. Having reawakened his love of rock'n'roll in the mid-Eighties (see *The Map: Rediscovering Rock And Roll*), Paul, who still edits *Crawdaddy!*, is as enthusiastic about the music as he was 30 years ago

"Cold Irons Bound" rocks out in the Number 3 spot, previously-held by "All Along The Watchtower". "Can't Wait", gloriously expressive, never exactly the same one night to the next, is in the Number 5 spot between Number 4 (likely to be different every night, another surprise from the huge songbook Dylan and his band had rehearsed and were drawing from) and Number 6, always "Silvio", a song clearly chosen because Dylan likes the response it invariably gets from audiences, a response not based on the song's reputation or nostalgic value (never a hit, a song from an obscure 1988 album, with lyrics by the Dead's Robert Hunter) and therefore necessarily based on the performance, the feel, what's happening right here this moment.

"'Til I Fell In Love With You" is in the Number 12 spot, the dramatic "show-closer", a kind of summation, a rave-up to make a big R'n'B band statement before walking offstage so the audience can go through the ritual of demanding encores.

Which encores always included "Love Sick" at the penultimate Number 15 spot . . .

Decades from now, when we're nostalgic for these great 1997-98 club tour shows, it will be the sound of the opening of "Love Sick" that we'll remember. The opening song of the album, the closing song of the live show (except for the perfunctory "Rainy Day Women"), "Love Sick" is what you hear in your ears as you're walking out of the theatre. *"I'm walkin', through streets that are dead, walkin' with you in my head/My feet are so tired, my brain is so wired . . ."* Sounds great on the record. But it had a whole new sound at these shows, and it was unforgettable.

Also important to the show's structure is the acoustic set, songs seven through nine, not exactly solo acoustic, but full band including drums. This set at the El Rey always started with a cover song, usually celebrating some kind of outlaw activity ("Cocaine Blues", "Roving Gambler", "Stone Walls And Steel Bars"). This would be followed by a particular kind of Dylan classic, crowd-pleaser but singer-pleaser, too, all part of putting together a show that will satisfy the muse and thrill the crowd and fulfil the singer's purpose in life, all at once.

Number 8 songs (mid-acoustic set) from the El Rey included: "Hattie Carroll" (wow, what a performance!), "One Too Many Mornings", "Mr Tambourine Man", "Love Minus Zero", "John Brown". Number 8 songs that were "alternate choices" on Dylan's set lists, the ones we *could* have gotten: "Desolation Row", "To Ramona".

I'M SURE DYLAN FELT MORE CONFIDENT OF HIS ability to get exactly the sound and feel he wanted with this band than any unit he's ever put together – not that they were *better*, it just has to do with the bandleader's feeling about his instrument.

So imagine yourself standing in that high-ceilinged club (old burlesque theatre with great chandeliers) surrounded by other ecstatic Bob fans, including Ringo Starr and Eric Clapton and André Agassi, listening to "I And I" and "This Wheel's On Fire", and "Born In Time" and "It Takes A Lot To Laugh, It Takes A Train To Cry", which had Dylan bobbing his head in obvious enjoyment of his own guitar playing and of the unexpected and delightful vocal phrasing he just heard himself create and, most of all, of the audience's response to all this, which he notices, which he revels in as evidently as if he were Chuck Berry or Jimi Hendrix or Little Richard or Howlin' Wolf.

Finally, while the fans and experts debate endlessly about why Dylan does what he does, I suggest the answers are right there in these lines from Dylan's 1997 interviews: "Being on the road to me is just as natural as breathing. It's rewarding to thrill the crowd. That's all I can tell you about it." And this, in response to fans speculating again about his religious beliefs: "I don't know what people are wondering about. I've always felt an unseen presence, all the time, ever since I was small." And, "I find the religiosity and philosophy in the music, songs like 'Let Me Rest On A Peaceful Mountain'. That's my religion. The songs are my lexicon. I believe the songs." And: "The songs I play night after night are proven to be true and strong. Otherwise I couldn't sing them night after night. They can be performed over and over because there is a truth in them. I was constantly thinking [while working on the new album], 'Will any of these songs stand up with what I'm playing night after night?'"

At the El Rey, he found out that they do. And in that sense, completed *Time Out Of Mind* to his satisfaction. And as a member of the crowd, I'm here to tell you it's rewarding (and kinda religious) to be thrilled by a great living artist.

Night after night. After all these years . . .

DYLAN'S EL REY SET LISTS

December 16, 1997
Opening Act: **BECK**, solo acoustic
DYLAN: Maggie's Farm • Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You • Cold Irons Bound • You Ain't Goin' Nowhere • Can't Wait • Silvio • Cocaine Blues (acoustic) • The Lonesome Death Of Hattie Carroll (acoustic) • Tangled Up In Blue (acoustic) • Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again • This Wheel's On Fire • 'Til I Fell In Love With You
Encores: Highway 61 Revisited • Forever Young (acoustic) • Love Sick • Rainy Day Women #12 & 35

December 17, 1997
Opening Act: **JEWEL**, solo acoustic
DYLAN: Maggie's Farm • Señor (Tales Of Yankee Power) • Cold Irons Bound • You're A Big Girl Now • Can't Wait • Silvio • Roving Gambler (acoustic) • One Too Many Mornings (acoustic) • Tangled Up In Blue (acoustic) • White Dove • Blind Willie McTell • 'Til I Fell In Love With You
Encores: Highway 61 Revisited • My Back Pages (acoustic) • Love Sick • Rainy Day Women #12 & 35

December 18, 1997
Opening Act: **SHERYL CROW** and band
DYLAN: Maggie's Farm • I Want You • Cold Irons Bound • Born In Time • Can't Wait • Silvio • Stone Walls And Steel Bars (acoustic) • Mr Tambourine Man (acoustic) • Tangled Up In Blue (acoustic) • It Takes A Lot To Laugh, It Takes A Train To Cry • Blind Willie McTell • 'Til I Fell In Love With You
Encores: Like A Rolling Stone • It Ain't Me, Babe (acoustic) • Love Sick • Rainy Day Women #12 & 35

December 19, 1997
Opening Act: **SHERYL CROW** and band
DYLAN: Maggie's Farm • Man In The Long Black Coat • Cold Irons Bound • Just Like A Woman • Can't Wait • Silvio • Oh Babe It Ain't No Lie (acoustic) • Love Minus Zero/No Limit (acoustic) • Tangled Up In Blue (acoustic) • When I Paint My Masterpiece • Joey • 'Til I Fell In Love With You
Encores: Highway 61 Revisited (Crow: guitar and vocals) • Knockin' On Heaven's Door (Crow: accordion and vocals) • Love Sick • Rainy Day Women #12 & 35

December 20, 1997
Opening Act: **WILLIE NELSON**
DYLAN: Maggie's Farm • Tonight I'll Be Staying Here With You • Cold Irons Bound • Under The Red Sky • Can't Wait • Silvio • Cocaine Blues (acoustic) • John Brown (acoustic) • Tangled Up In Blue (acoustic) • I & I • I'll Remember You • 'Til I Fell In Love With You •
Encores: Highway 61 Revisited • Don't Think Twice • It's All Right (acoustic) • Love Sick • Rainy Day Women #12 & 35

ourprice HMV MVC WHSmith MEGASTORES

DÉBUTANTE
A Polygram Company

HUTCH ADO . . .

Michael Hutchence enthroned, cloaked in black leather. An appropriate visual for your recent tribute. To *this* follower, Hutchence onstage in 1997 was a bit more than "energetic" and a "visual focus". He was a slinky, sensual rock god at the height of his powers. Let no *Uncut* reader forget it.

INXS' summer *Elegantly Wasted* tour was anything but: Michael's throaty, impassioned baritone, his lithe, usually semi-clad form and sexy-funny antics gave me religion. His edgy, clearly autobiographical new lyrics made him even more compelling.

My tribute? Panties were pressed into heated hands, scarves were wrapped around available appendages, and grapes were given. All thanks to the miracle of Michael's sweet disposition.

From Cleveland to the East Coast to Montréal and back again, Hutchence never lost faith in concert or when interacting with admirers backstage. After shows, he was a sexy, gracious gentleman, taking time to chat, sign autographs and pose for photos.

The band's last performance (September 27 at the Starlake Ampitheatre, Pittsburgh) testified to Michael's glory. Bounding between old hits and new songs, Hutchence commanded the throng of several thousand cheering fans. INXS went out with a roar as the headliner of a day-long festival show.

During the encore, Michael sang "Don't Change". Long may he rock and rule.

Bonnie Dennison, Columbus, Ohio

Uncut reiterates that INXS were never what you'd call a major influence on modern music, but there's no denying the fervour of Hutchence's fans. Takes all sorts to make a world.

COUNTRY NOUS

Have to hand it to you, lads, your alternative country stuff of late has made for great reading altogether. Just one thing, though, you failed to mention the mighty Walkabouts. They've be (un)plugging away for years now, breaking all kinds of hearts, guitar strings and what have you, on the Sub Pop label, of all places.

Their covers album, *Satisfied Mind*, is a bit of a minor classic in this genre, doing great justice to the likes of Charlie Rich, Nick Cave and Canada's extraordinary Mary Margaret O'Hara. Speaking of whom, it's about time we heard something new from the magnificent woman. Her last album, 1988's *Miss America*, while not strictly part of this new alternative country lark, sounded gloriously like Patsy Cline doing *Astral Weeks*. A real case of same planet, different worlds, if ever there was one.

Jimmy Corr, Portobello, Dublin

Last we heard, Mary Margaret was visiting friends in Finsbury Park shortly before Christmas, not that that helps you much, Jimmy.

GRIM WHITE DUKE

Dear Mr Reaper (or is is Ms?)

With regard to your ludicrously one-sided view of the career of David Bowie: ooh, aren't we a bitter little man/woman? I do hope your pursuit of sensible music/musicians leads you to a fun-free nirvana. While agreeing with some of your tone, all I need to know is what drives you to be so nasty? Is it jealousy, superiority (real or imagined), or are you just being devil's advocate for the sake of it?

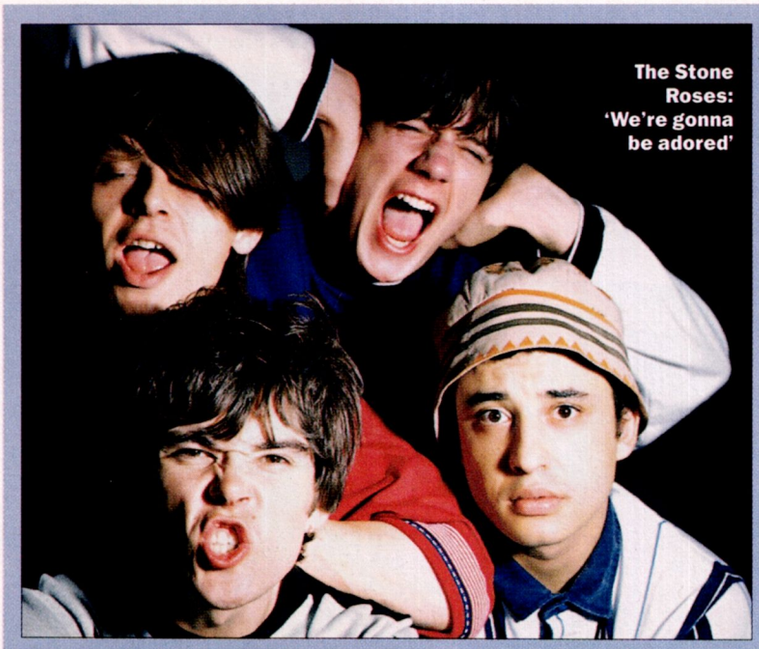
There are loads of things Mr Bowie has done which just sound great – end of story. It's a shame that simple entertainment requires you to be so anal. Loosen up, you may even live longer. Oh, and slagging Tin Machine off is the ultimate in journalistic laziness and passé thoughtlessness.

Personally, I would much prefer not to read any more of your "art" until you get some form of perspective. I'm off for a twang. In the woods, in the woods.

To the rest of you – great mag!

Scary Spear, Birmingham

Well, even you can't defend Mr Bowie's ludicrous new Mohawk hairstyle while keeping a straight face, can you, Scary?



The Stone Roses: 'We're gonna be adored'

ROSES ARE CRED

AS a devoted Stone Roses fan, from the very beginning, I was absolutely thrilled by the article in last month's issue of *Uncut*. It was a fascinating, sensible tribute to a great band, which treated their legacy with intelligence and respect.

Like many old Roses fans, I've bought the Ian Brown and Seahorses records, and while there are the occasional glimmers of brilliance, they just don't match up to the music that went before. Mr Brown has done the rounds of the music and style mags of late, but it took *Uncut* to unearth the real story of exactly what went on during those dark days before and after the *Second Coming* album.

It was a stroke of genius to talk to all the peripheral players in this bizarre rock'n'roll drama. Noel Gallagher's respectful remarks were especially welcome, if only more musicians had the guts to admit that The Stone Roses were a major influence. I hear it in so much of the guitar group offerings of the past few years, and it's about time that the Roses were given the credit that's been so long overdue to them.

Sharon Chesterton, Bury, Lancs

What the Roses lacked in actual volume of recorded music, it would appear they more than made up for it in terms of impact and influence. How many other bands who've fallen by the wayside are remembered so fondly?

SLEEPER VS REAPER

I love *Uncut*. It is a fine, well-written and intelligent magazine. However,The Reaper's article on Woody Allen was, to be blunt, laughable cack. Yes, I absolutely agree that there are more than a few sexist one-liners, and that Woody's own personal character is, erm, questionable, particularly in the light of recent developments.

But I do think, personality aside, he is a damn fine film-maker, possibly one of the best. He's not at all pretentious. Rather, he sends up pretension in every single film from *Annie Hall* onwards. The screen persona which he has carved for himself is that of a man in terminal denial. He wants to sleep around, but inevitably falls in love and, more often than not, loses the woman in the process.

The women in his films are "weakminded"? Hardly. Diane Keaton is a wonderfully talented actress, she upstages Allen in almost every film they've been in together (and who won the Oscar?). He has written some excellent roles for women: Gena Rowlands in *Another Woman*, Judy Davis, Kathy Bates, Dianne Wiest's wonderfully melodramatic lush in *Bullets Over Broadway*, Helena Bonham Carter, Goldie Hawn, etc. For God's sake, he's even outsmarted by a 20-year-old in *Husbands And Wives*!

As for *Stardust Memories* being autobiographical – *what?* Haven't you seen Fellini's *8½* then? It's a direct bleedin' parody! And *Hannah And Her Sisters* isn't boring, it's a mature, charmingly tender film. Michael Caine is so deliciously sleazy.

To me, Woody Allen's appeal lies in the way he acknowledges comedy's past as well as blending it with themes of love, death, conflict, class and so on, without resorting to being totally crass, or using excessive violence and gun worship. And he doesn't care about being trendy – you only have to listen to his soundtracks to realise that. Give him his dues, the Woodman is OK

Anyway, sorry about all that, I'm outta here.

Lorna Irvine, Dundee

Two letters of outrage on the subject of The Reaper's writing? Just proves that our resident scythemeister must be doing something right.

A REEL FAN

I have just finished reading your January issue from cover to cover. It's an excellent mix of film and music and it's head and shoulders above its immediate rivals. I was particularly pleased to see *The Fast Show*'s Colin Hunt at the bottom of page 28 in your cocaine feature.

The *Reel Music* CD was excellent throughout, with one slight exception – the Billy Taylor track should have been included in full! All things considered, though, it's a top CD.

Thanks again for a great read.

Crispin Coulson, Chelmsford, Essex

TRIO BRAVO

The issue with Ian Curtis on the cover was fantastic, not just because of the main feature, but because it featured the classic Eighties triumvirate of *Melody Maker* writers, Simon Reynolds, David Stubbs and Chris Roberts, together again. Fuckin' fantastic. What a reunion.

Actually, without wanting to sound like a true arse-kisser, *Uncut* is a mighty fine read: fine writers penning fine features on mighty fine bands and film. All this and Allan Jones still hates Paul Weller with a passion that grows by the second. Ever thought about cutting Weller a bit of slack? No, I thought not.

Neil Roberts, Wirral, Merseyside

WHERE'S THAT GIRL?

Isn't it about time that *Uncut* devoted some space to women artists? The likes of Lennon, Dylan and so on are all very well, and I'm extremely grateful for the excellent articles you've run on them in the past, but, c'mon, guys, give the chicks a look-in.

I'm thinking of legends like Janis Joplin, Chrissie Hynde, Debbie Harry, Aretha Franklin and Kate Bush, not to mention modern-day heroines such as Tori Amos or Sheryl Crow. There's certainly no shortage of great stories to tell concerning all the above, and it would take a magazine the calibre of *Uncut* to do them all justice, rather than just scratch the surface as most other publications do.

I'll be watching, waiting, hoping.

Danielle Houghton, Solihull

WHOOPS!

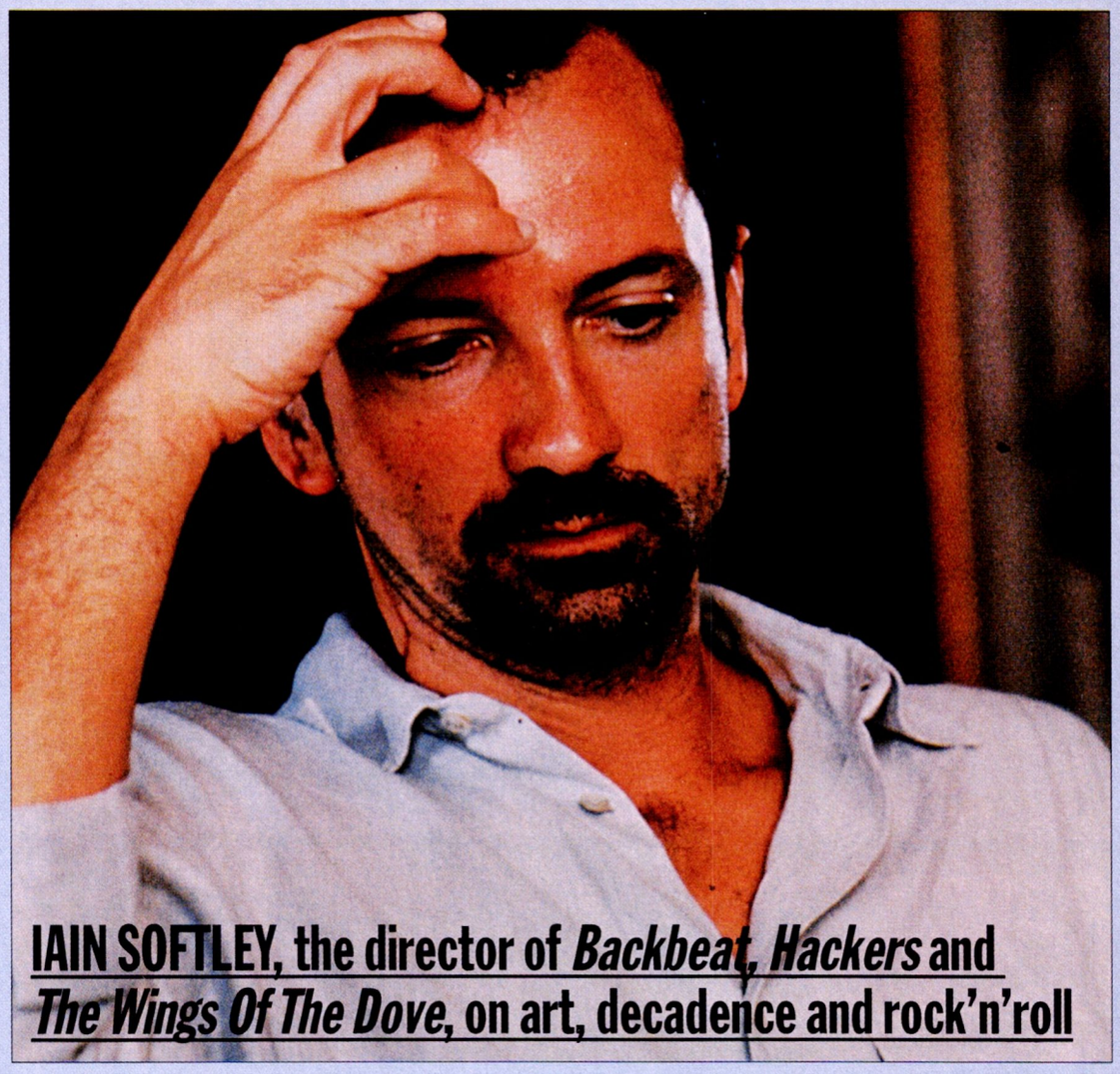
In my piece on *Performance* in last month's *Uncut*, I unwittingly referred to the murder victim at The Rolling Stones' Altamont concert as Meredith Brooks. It was, in fact, Meredith Hunter. EMI's PR machine had clearly got into my head. I may not care for Brooks' music, but she certainly doesn't deserve to die. Apologies all round.

Neil Spencer, London NW5

write to us at ***Uncut* Editorial, 13th Floor, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS**, or e-mail us at **terry_staunton@ipc.co.uk** or fax us on **0171-261 5573**

IPC magazines reserves the right to re-use any submission sent to the letters page of Uncut, in any form or medium

by Chris Roberts



IAIN SOFTLEY, the director of *Backbeat*, *Hackers* and *The Wings Of The Dove*, on art, decadence and rock'n'roll

The Wings Of The Dove is very different from the conventional "period drama".

"I was a little worried when I read the Henry James book: I had visions of Edwardian people talking in drawing rooms. But I was soon struck by how seductive the lead character of Kate is, and by the dark undercurrents to the story. It's about betrayal, and there's something very spicy about that. The screenwriter and I worked out that if we focused on the love triangle we could do something that was much more of a *film noir*, that had a psychological complexity, a sensuality and an intimacy. An *edge* that one wouldn't necessarily associate with a literary adaptation."

Was human frailty as active at the turn of the century as it is now?

"Yes, people talk about the decorum of the time, about restraint and repression, but it was also a time of incredible decadence in the *avant-garde* art world – from Aubrey Beardsley to Oscar Wilde. It was the beginning of the modern era, with Picasso, with the emancipation of women . . . a time of great cultural change. I wanted to take away everything that'd be a barrier between these characters and the audience, to make them timeless. At times a little bit Nineties, but not in your face. In all the areas of design, I emphasised electricity, telephones, motor cars . . . we actually moved the period forward about seven years from the time the book was published, just to hit the wave of social and technological change. By 1908, the clothes were more sensual, looser, less buttoned up and repressed.

"Similarly, when we take them to Venice, in the book they're accompanied by a chaperone, Aunt Maude. We decided to leave her behind in London – as a way of creating a timeless, exotic, flirtatious relationship between the three leads. I wanted the vibe of Marrakesh in the Sixties! Primitive North African music, bright colours, a sense of excitement and perhaps danger . . ."

Helena Bonham Carter tackles her role very subversively.

"Very refreshing, isn't it? There's this slightly anarchic feeling. The story *is* subverting people's expectations about it. Here are people who are trying to manipulate a world that they feel has manipulated them. And they're fighting back."

Venice has a dark, brooding beauty. How much of that is down to you?

"One of the things I pick up on when I go to Venice is the piquant paradox between life and death. Between splendour and tragedy. I love Fellini's *Casanova*. And I'm aware of the fact that the carnival mask [based on those of plague doctors] was in a way a licence for promiscuity and violence for many generations. The city itself is like a plot, with twists and turns: you don't know whether you're going to meet an assassin or a lover around each corner. It's a city built on *ooze*, on mud, which is itself a rotting medium: it's this mixture of the sublime and the earthly. As a backdrop, it intoxicates these characters as they play out their story of love and death."

Backbeat and Hackers dealt with "pop" culture – is The Wings . . . a conscious effort to show diversity?

"It probably wasn't conscious, but while 'pop culture' is a big thing to me, it's certainly not the only thing I'm interested in. Inevitably, the same sorts of ideas emerge from project to project, because it's the same person dreaming them up. In all cases, I try to create a world which is sensual and visual and exciting to be in for two hours.

"*Backbeat* was about the dynamic cross-fertilisation of a raw unstudied energy with a very bohemian, self-conscious art world. Art and rock'n'roll. Both elements were found in Hamburg. And, like *The Wings Of The Dove*, it featured a tragic love triangle in a film about desire and loss. Yet whereas I was able to look at the cultural change of The Beatles' early days retrospectively, as it'd happened 30 years earlier, with *Hackers* it was a question of commenting on something, being fed by it, *as it was happening*. The Nineties cyber-culture was an equivalent to the Sixties psychedelic revolution. As opposed to reflecting on it, we had to anticipate it."

You took some stick for that.

"In the soundtrack, I think we anticipated a bit *too* much. A year later everyone had heard of The Prodigy, they were Number One in America. But when the film initially came out, they couldn't get a record deal there. The digital counter-culture hadn't been picked up in any of the other films about hacking or The Internet. It's since fed into rave culture and become a massive phenomenon."

Has your background in music documentaries proven useful to you?

"I try to make music and film come together in different ways. I've learned how to 'cover' music. I tried to make every song in *Backbeat* differently shot. I was aware of the grammar of live music and how to evoke that. We tried to get people involved who shared an energy and an attitude – The Afghan Whigs, Thurston Moore – who'd kick it as much as reinterpret it. I don't see film as merely a literary or dialogue medium: sometimes moments of dramatic insight can be conveyed, moved forward, through the visual and musical – a potent combination."

What's next for you?

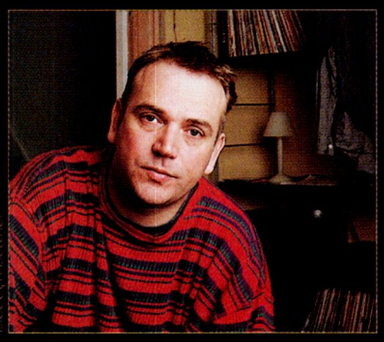
"Possibly a film that'll be like *Don't Look Now* set in the Lake District, based on the book, *The Boathouse*. And probably a film about Otis Redding."

Are you an Otis fan?

"Yes, but while the music will be fantastic, it's also a very good script by Joe Eszterhas. It's a black-white buddy movie with a soul background. But I don't want imitations. As with Ian Hart playing John Lennon, I wanted him to be aware of certain mannerisms, but to play it as if he was him. If you don't get a good performance then the best lighting and camera work in the world are irrelevant."

***The Wings Of The Dove*: a timeless love triangle**

A TIME



Brooklyn Butcher

Resurrection Man, set against a background of sectarian violence in mid-Seventies Belfast, is one of the most violent, terrifying and remarkable British films ever made. But does it sacrifice political context for super-charged pulp fiction thrills? Neil Kulkarni talks to the movie's director, MARC EVANS _(left)_, while Michael Bonner meets techno pioneer DAVID HOLMES _(right)_, who provided the film with its electrifying soundtrack

Steve Gullick

MARC EVANS

AT THE PREVIEW OF RESURRECTION MAN, Marc Evans' new film based on Eoin McNamee's 1993 novel of the same name, some major dissembling is going on. "It's not that violent, and the politics are really understated," we're told by a jovial, chubby man. "They leave it very ambiguous as to what side of the sectarian divide they're talking about."

Two hours later, you feel like you've been bludgeoned senseless and dazzled by the most stylishly-shot brutality and immaculately glammed-up psychopaths ever seen in a British film. Although it concentrates principally on one character, major psycho Victor Kelly, *Resurrection Man* is loosely based on the real exploits of the Shankill Butchers, a particularly deranged gang of Protestant murderers in mid-Seventies Belfast. In the movie's stunned aftermath, you hear conflicting opinions. Some people affect a curious indifference, others describe it as a masterpiece.

So let's make at least one thing clear here about the film: it fails.

It attempts to package one of the most terrifying episodes in Ireland's history cinematically; it attempts to allow character to subsume politics, directorial flash'n'burn to subsume depth of content. But its failure is fantastic. It hits on a mix of sheer cinematic flair and contextual immensity that's incredible. It's agit-prop swagger, opera with steel-tipped boots on, slam-bang entertainment constructed from the slime of Real Bloody Life.

And that rub, the friction between *Resurrection Man*'s desire to be a stylish pulp character study and the political complexities it's grounded in and can't avoid, is what makes it a movie worth seeing.

Maybe now more than ever.

MARC EVANS IS KEEN TO PLAY DOWN THE film's politics and he does it pretty convincingly. The Welsh-born director, who made his feature film debut last year with *House Of America*, sees *Resurrection Man* as simply a great thriller.

"That's what attracted me to Eoin McNamee's novel," he explains. "He abstracts it away from a real place and a real time. He mentions Belfast as a name, once. It's every city, it's universal. I tried to make a film which suggests the feeling of that place, but doesn't get stifled by the responsibility of the subject matter. The book is like a dream memory of a bad time. And that's exactly how I shot it."

People are going to be bandying around that lazy standby "*noir*ish" when they talk about this film, but for once, with *Resurrection Man*, it's an appropriate description. The photography dramatises the narrative perfectly – Belfast (or rather Manchester and Liverpool, chosen for their current similarity to that city in the mid-Seventies) is dead and grey during the day, and comes alive at night in a grisly neon slur of blue interiors, black skies and white light.

'I wanted *Resurrection Man* to recast a time we all shared, give us back our own pasts honestly, stylishly and powerfully'

"We decided to make a black-and-white film in colour," says Evans. "Pierre Aim [the director of photography who won a Caesar for his work on *La Haine*] and I wanted to exploit the tone of Forties and Fifties thrillers without resorting to pastiche, and using that as a touchstone to try and convert what Eoin did in the writing into pictures. By day, the city is a decaying Victorian city, but by night it describes itself by light, the ultimate brief for making a film. A lot of characters in *film noir* are almost too big for their environment.

"Victor [played like a Sex Pistol by newcomer Stuart Townsend] is almost vampiric, lurking in the streets of this mythical city, and we keep dissolving from one character to another to illustrate complicity and how people get enmeshed in each other's lives. Despite themselves, they are all inter-connected and linked to the central theme of men and violence."

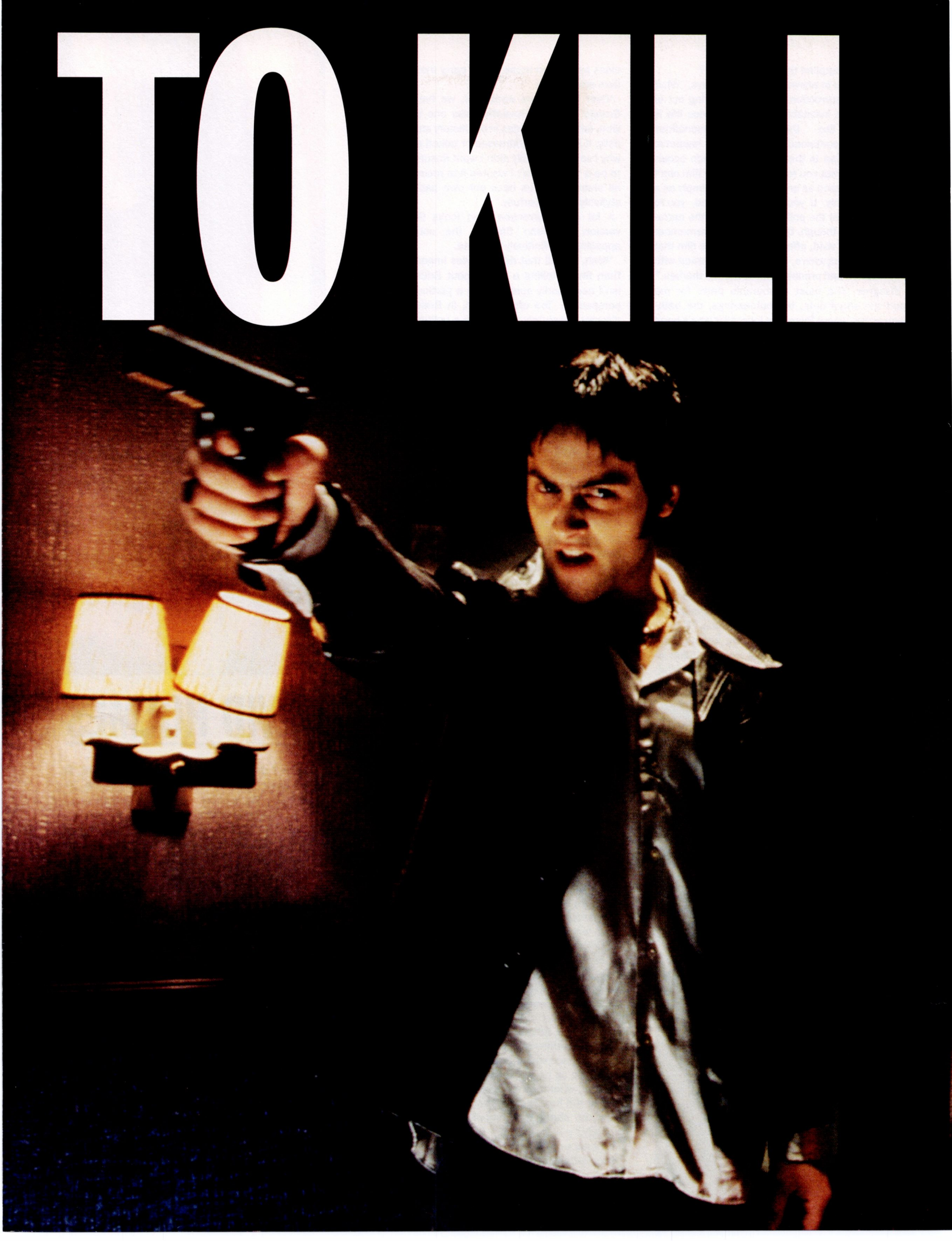
And politics, I suggest.

"Absolutely not," Evans insists. "While the context of the film is pretty specific, the themes are universal. For me, it's about men and violence and an atmosphere of limited choice and criminality leading to something else. The first image of the film is a little boy with a gun pointing at the camera – it's a William Klein photograph. As a child, Victor goes to see Jimmy Cagney movies and trades Bogart dust-offs with his mum [a brilliantly evil Brenda Fricker, detonating the typecast with relish]. It's a gun-culture that impels them, not politics, and that's what we took from *noir*, not so much a homage, but the use of those ideas of the lonely man and the city, and the hunter and the hunted."

THE CONCLUSION TO MARTIN DILLON'S FASCInating book, *The Shankill Butchers – A Case Study Of Mass Murder,* is distinctly troubling. Hunting around for some psychological explanation for this collective insanity, he considers that their leader, Lenny Murphy (upon whom Victor is perhaps based), and some of the other gang members may have been psychopaths, implying that the Troubles were just a convenient excuse for some people – people already on some collision course with the future and dangerously out of control.

The Troubles gave them a motive they didn't need, and an excuse, which they did. Perhaps the most startling question to emerge from *Resurrection Man* is the one it steadfastly refuses to answer: what was that collision course, and why couldn't

TO KILL



someone have applied the brakes sooner?

"It's not my job to answer that," Evans says. "What happens in *Resurrection Man* is the playing out of character to its inevitable conclusion. Once life is overcharged like that, with personalities too big to be contained, then this shit happens: *Resurrection Man* is the story of one such occurrence. I know what you're saying, that the film can't easily be dismissed as entertainment or simply as a thriller. Inevitably, if you set it in Ireland, you're going to confront the political realities of the narrative. I do think, though, that the bits you remember most, the most vivid, affecting parts of the film that could happen anywhere, are mainly concerned with men, violence and predestination. Eternal themes."

I disagree. The most memorable parts for me aren't the shoot-outs, the butcherings, the bathhouse scene where Ryan, the journalist who's been hunting the killers, finally finds Victor, holed-up, off the deep end, transforming the place into a charnel house of corpses. They're remarkable scenes, for sure, if only for the gleeful playfulness of them – but what you come away remembering most are quieter scenes, scenes of reflection, scenes absolutely bound up in time and place. Victor sitting in the back of the gang's car, eyes closed, breathing slowly, intoning road names as they drive, inch-perfect directions falling from his lips like a mantra. Ryan meeting Heather, Victor's girlfriend, in a ghastly seaside disco, the broken-down hopelessness of the place rendered in heartbreaking detail. And there's a hilarious homo-militaristic scene in which Victor, snorting speed off mentor McLure's desk, squares up to him under a picture of Hitler and a Union Jack, and their lips pucker together daringly.

"The thing is, a more personal thing I wanted to do with the film was something American movies have been able to do for years," Evans explains. "That is, remythologise our past. It's always annoyed me that Americans have this huge cultural bank of myths about their recent pasts, about working-class pasts, and these myths carry their own signifiers and lexicon.

"Over here, if we want that, we have to watch *Grange Hill*. The Seventies was one of the most vital, definitive decades in our history and, cinematically, it isn't even addressed or talked about.That's why I so emphatically didn't want *Resurrection Man* to be a 'slice of life'; I wanted it to recast a time we all shared, give us back our own pasts honestly, stylishly and powerfully."

A lot of *Resurrection Man* looks like an Irish version of *Mean Streets*: the soundtrack is appallingly, definitively accurate.

"Yeah, but all that detail is less important for me than finally telling a story about British Life that isn't necessarily coming from a particular political perspective. Too often, I feel, in British film, the director absolutely preordains a political message that emerges from the film. I'd rather let the complexities emanate from character; have all the different subjects and influences play on – and speak through – one person. I'd rather suggest than dictate, and when it came to politics in this film, I didn't even want to suggest. I just wanted to tell a universal story, and give us back a part of our past."

I think Evans is being disingenuous here. He's entirely right to want to repossess that history – what he can't do, what anyone who's grown up in the past 20 years in the UK can't do, is run away from the political referents and context of their youth. Bad US mythology does precisely that and is a technique that should be replicated as much as criticised. The best US mythologisers – from Peckinpah to Ellroy to Scorsese to Ice-T – have always been utterly aware of the political basis many of their narratives are steeped in and have explored that.

Evans seems to want to avoid this approach – maybe through fear of hectoring, maybe through fear of the authentic honesty and "worthiness" of British film. I don't think he has to be scared and, fundamentally, I don't think he's managed it. *Resurrection Man* fizzles with politics, because only in a political struggle would Victor's story be anywhere near as moving or terrifying. Victor is encouraged by fascists, ennobled by a blind mother and a zombie father, intoxicated by media attention, finally driven insane by an atmosphere of doom and brutality that is a political fact first and foremost. The film has an awful lot to say about sectarian struggles, but is shit-scared of sacrificing its dazzle and verve in the name of a "position".

FOR ALL THIS, RESURRECTION MAN STILL CONtains enough political bite and insight to be a powerful rewrite and charging of history. That's why you should see this film. Perhaps now more than ever.

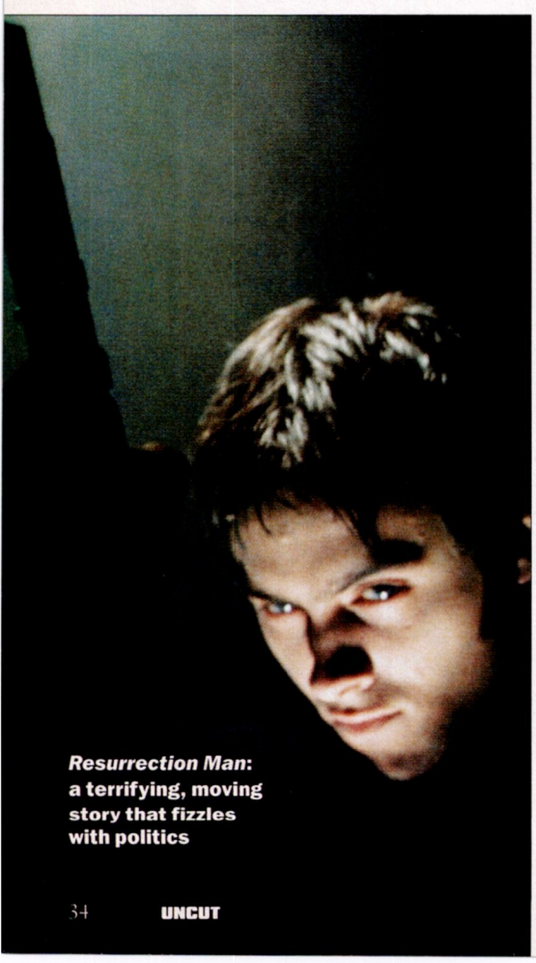
Are you worried about the possible reactions to *Resurrection Man*?

"I'm looking forward to the reaction," Evans grins. "I think there may be very quick knee-jerk reactions to the violence, to the glamour, and I'm sure Stuart Townsend is going to be a star. I'm more interested in the long-term reactions, the debates it'll kick off, the pub arguments it will create. I mean, I contend that the reason for Victor's behaviour is 50 per cent mystery and 50 per cent culture. I also contend that that culture is apolitical and universal. If anyone disagrees with that, that's healthy.

"So long as people know what I want to say with the film, whether they agree or disagree is all just part of the fun. There's always a reaction. Nobody can just shrug their shoulders after seeing it. Nobody."

He's not wrong.

Go see the first essential film of the year.



***Resurrection Man*: a terrifying, moving story that fizzles with politics**

Steve Gullick

DAVID HOLMES

"I DIDN'T SET OUT TO MAKE FILMIC MUSIC, IT just happened," begins David Holmes, the 29-year-old, Belfast-born hairdresser turned musician, DJ and soundtrack composer. "It's where I am naturally. People picked up on it long before I did. I suppose it all goes back to making music inspired by your own experiences. The best music is the stuff that's born directly from people's own emotions, just letting everything out."

The chances are you'll know David Holmes from his second album, the fiercely eclectic *Let's Get Killed*, released last August. Infused with his love for Northern Soul, techno, Ennio Morricone, Sixties Latin jazz and Serge Gainsbourg, the album was as varied as it was stylish, and despite its seasoned influences, thoroughly modern sounding. Linked by the thoughts and feelings of New York's seemingly endless population of freaks, psychos and lunatics, whom Holmes had recorded on an acid-aided weekend jaunt to NYC, it won him unanimous acclaim from both the rock and dance fraternities and spawned a trio of first-rate singles – including the outrageous Northern Soul meets Acid House stomp, "My Mate Paul", which is re-released this month.

Also this month, you can hear Holmes' soundtrack for *Resurrection Man*. Although this is the first film Holmes has scored, he composed the music for Lynda La Plante's Manchester-based police drama,

Holmes: 'There's some good scores out there, but there's a lot of people just knocking out the same bollocks over and over again'

Supply And Demand, which was aired on ITV last summer.

"Lynda bought my first album, *This Film's Crap Let's Slash The Seats*, because she thought the title was cool," admits Holmes. "She picked up on 'No Man's Land', which was inspired by *In The Name Of The Father*, and she asked me to do 'Supply And Demand'. It was a real stepping-stone for me, and respect to Lynda for having the balls to get something a bit different on the soundtrack.

"*Resurrection Man* came about through the same track. The producers heard it and thought it fitted the film. I find that kind of ironic, because the track's inspiration – the story of four men who were wrongly jailed for a bombing, one of whom died in prison – is very different from this incredibly sinister movie about a group of Loyalist serial killers who travelled round Belfast picking up people and torturing them. It's not a particularly political film; sure, these nutcases are bitter and twisted towards Catholics, but the real Shankill Butchers killed over 30 people, Catholics and Protestants alike. That's the largest number of victims in any serial killer case in British legal history."

What were the advantages for you, as a Belfast resident, in scoring the film?

"It was already under my skin – I could tap into the fear. I have three elder brothers, and our mum used to tell us to take a taxi and never walk anywhere – she used to get really worried if we were late home. I mean, these people could take *anyone*. The fear of that hanging over your head is fucking incredible."

HOLMES HAS EFFECTIVELY BEEN MAKING film-related music since his 1989 debut, *De Niro* – under the aegis of The Disco Evangelists with fellow DJ Ashley Beedle – which was inspired by Sergio Leone's *Once Upon A Time In America*.

"I saw it first when I was quite young, and it had a big impact on me, not just the film but Morricone's score as well," Holmes recalls fondly. "I bought the soundtrack album, and one night I'd been out clubbing . . . it was those days in the late-Eighties where every night was like the best night of your life, y'know? I remember getting depressed because all I wanted to do was make music or play music. The album moved me to tears, then Ashley and I made *De Niro* and sampled the flutes from the Morricone score, and it worked really well; it sold 30,000 copies."

'You need new ideas, you need to keep pushing yourself. That's what was great about *Resurrection Man*'

The record, a minor classic now, led Holmes to work under several aliases (including Johnny Favourite, after Mickey Rourke's character in *Angel Heart*) for different record companies before signing to Go! Beat under his own name in 1995. Each release saw Holmes shift styles with chameleon-like ease, embracing house, techno and beyond, always searching for a new idea.

"You need new ideas, you need to keep pushing yourself. That's what was great about *Resurrection Man*, Marc Evans wanted something different, with strange effects and textures. We [Holmes and his collaborators, Gary Burns and Keith Tenniswood] were using everything – from playing guitars backwards to using old analogue synths to create this John Carpenter feel, like in *Halloween*.

"We got credit cards and scraped them down metal sheets and put the sound through effects boxes. It was fantastic – I love working with people with that state of mind; they're forward thinkers. And I think our score is pretty unusual. You should always go for something unique. There's some good scores out there, but there's a lot of people just knocking out the same bollocks over and over again."

WITH RESURRECTION MAN RECEIVING SUCH good notices, Holmes plans to do more soundtrack work. There's a possible David Arnold collaboration, and he's working with friends in Belfast on a film they intend to fund and make themselves. Even Hollywood has got in on the act, and he's in negotiations to score a big studio picture.

"I'm a record collector," he grins, "and I just find these weird little things that are fucking amazing, and I'd start putting things like that in movies. Really fucked-up *avant garde*, seriously funky stuff; old soul and rare groove. Just take it out there to a wider audience. Surprise them a bit, y'know?"

Resurrection Man is on general release; My Mate Paul and Let's Get Killed are available now on Go! Beat

Conventional wisdom has it that cars built for safety are unrewarding to drive. An idea neatly refuted by the new Volvo S40 T4. For while it has a long list of features designed to protect driver and passengers, like SIPS with side airbags, beneath the bonnet is a 200 bhp turbocharged engine. Should you need to overtake, say, an articulated lorry, 30-70mph will take you just 5.9 seconds†. And if that sounds as though the T4 barely touches the ground, nothing could be further from the truth. Our Dynamic Stability Assistance system controls the amount of torque sent to the wheels, so the grip stays reliable even when the conditions aren't. In short, the car with the enviable record for safety is now just plain enviable. The Volvo S40. From £14,930 to £23,880. Or from £330 per month via Volvo Contract Hire.* Ring 0800 11 40 40 for further details or to arrange a test drive.

VOLVO. A CAR YOU CAN BELIEVE IN.

*CONTRACT HIRE MONTHLY RATE EXCLUDES VAT & IS BASED ON 3 YEARS/60 000 MILES WITH MAINTENANCE CONTRACT · FOR BUSINESS USERS ONLY. FULL WRITTEN DETAILS AVAILABLE FROM VOLVO CAR FINANCE LTD, GLOBE PARK, MARLOW, BUCKS SL7 1YQ. CAR FEATURED VOLVO S40 T4 WITH WINTER AND COMFORT PACK £20,880 ON THE ROAD (INCLUDING DELIVERY

THE NEW S40 T4 WILL PUT YOUR MIND AT REST, BUT NOT YOUR PULSE.

VOLVO

THE NEW S40 T4

& 12 MONTHS ROAD FUND LICENCE AT £150). S40 RANGE FROM £14,930–£23,880 ON THE ROAD (INCL. DELIVERY & 12 MONTHS ROAD FUND LICENCE AT £150). ALL PRICES & PRODUCT DETAILS CORRECT AT GOING TO PRESS. FOR MORE DETAILS TEL: 0800 11 40 40 OR WRITE TO FREEPOST VOLVO. http//www.volvocars.volvo.co.uk. 'S40 T4 ROAD TEST - AUTOCAR 8/10/97

YOUR FREE CD IN FULL

The world's finest music and movie magazine has seen fit to unleash upon you, its devoted readership, *another* free compact disc – this time with 16 superb themes from 16 seminal, nay pivotal, slices of celluloid. From Elmer Bernstein's rich, rousing and insanely optimistic victory march from *The Great Escape*, to Bernard Herrmann's lavish, orchestral confection from Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, this unique compilation will thrill, chill and enthrall you for over 70 minutes . . . Now read on . . .

1. THE GREAT ESCAPE 1962 [2.18]
Composed by **Elmer Bernstein**
Performed by **The City Of Prague Philharmonic**, conducted by Paul Bateman, taken from ***Cinema Century*** *(FILMCD 180)* and ***Hollywood Heroes*** *(SILVAD 3501)*

BERNSTEIN's strident victory march will always exemplify courage in the face of adversity after its prominent use in John Sturges' all-star rewriting of WW2 history. Rich, rousing and insanely optimistic.

STURGES had to persuade Steve McQueen to sign up for his POW epic, as the king of cool had already shot two WWII flicks. Nonetheless, McQueen, billed an "impossible bastard" by cast and crew, *became* Hilts and guaranteed himself Bank Holiday movie immortality by demanding that he end the movie with a motorbike chase. But Steve had to leave the spectacular border fence jump to his stunt-riding mate, Bud Ekins.
Available on video from RCA video

2. ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK 1981 [4.13]
Composed by **John Carpenter**
Performed by **Daniel Caine**, taken from ***Halloween: The Best Of John Carpenter*** *(FILMCD 113)*

THE auteur king of frazzled sci-fi horror not only wrote and directed this 1981 masterpiece of gung-ho future-punk kitsch but also composed its throbbing synthesiser score, an edgy electronic collage of pulsing neon heartbeats and militaristic riffs. Of Carpenter's many self-written themes, this remains perhaps his most directly pop-friendly.

LIKE most Carpenter productions, *Escape From New York* is a trivia buff's paradise: Jamie Lee Curtis provides the opening narration and the computer voiceovers, Russell's then-wife, Season Hubley, plays the hooker who almost wastes Snake in the Chock Full O'Nuts coffee bar and Isaac Hayes' murderous henchmen-in-chief are named after Carpenter's indie-director buddies, George Romero and David Cronenberg.
BMG video

3. THE TERMINATOR 1984 [4.36]
Composed by **Brad Fiedel**
Performed by **Mark Ayres**, taken from ***Hollywood Tough Guys*** *(SILVAD 3506)* and ***Cinema Century*** *(FILMCD 180)*

TAPPING into the rising tide of early Eighties synth-pop, Fiedel's score for James Cameron's indie sci-fi cult classic incorporates early drum machines, metallic stomps, and martial robotic clanking in a theme as menacing and determinedly synthetic as Schwarzenegger's runaway killer android.

SPARE a thought for American football's premier wife-beater/suspected killer, OJ Simpson. He lost out on the chance to star as sci-fi cinema's most popular cybernetic villain because visionary producers feared that "he wouldn't be taken too seriously". Another casting loser was Lance Henriksen, who lost the role when Arnie decided to gamble on playing the bad guy.
Guild/PolyGram

4. ALIEN 1979 [3.50]
Composed by **Jerry Goldsmith**
Performed by **The City Of Prague Philharmonic**, conducted by **Nic Raine**, taken from ***The Cult Files*** *(FILMXCD 184)*

PERFECTLY complementing the deep space, haunted-house feel of Ridley Scott's ground-breaking 1979 future fable, Hollywood veteran Goldsmith followed up his Oscar-winning score for *The Omen* with this eerie patchwork of isolated string and woodwind sounds, claustrophobic creaks and ghostly echoes. Sparse and elemental, this is the sci-fi equivalent of the *Jaws* theme.

PRODUCERS Walter Hill and David Giler couldn't conceal their movie's similarities to AE Van Vogt's 1939 story, "Discord In Scarlet" – they were forced to settle with Van Vogt out of court. They *did* give Dan O'Bannon's derivative screenplay an uncredited polish, before Hill wisely decided he was unsuited to the project and handed over the directorial reins to former adman Ridley Scott. The rest is chest-bursting sci-fi history.
20th Century Fox video

5. THE THING 1982 [4.29]
Composed by **Ennio Morricone**
Performed by **Daniel Caine**, taken from ***Sci-Fi*** *(SILVAD 3508)* and ***The Mission*** *(FILMCD 171)*

IN striking contrast to director John Carpenter's dry electronic soundtrack, the prolific Roman emperor of movie scores weighs in at the mercilessly bleak finale of this still-unsurpassed alien chompfest with a dolorous masterpiece of tragic grandeur. Horns, strings and weeping harps match the surviving protagonists' mood of defeat, despair, and complete and utter desolation.

JOHN Carpenter at the height of his powers, bearded tough-guy Kurt Russell in a battered sombrero-style cowboy hat, a castful of grizzled US acting veterans, gob-smacking effects from Stan Winston and a great Morricone score – none of these were enough to stop the Finnish authorities from banning this movie upon its video release. Maybe it was all the ice and snow.
PolyGram video

6. RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK 1981 [5.07]
Composed by **John Williams**
Performed by **The City Of Prague Philharmonic**, conducted by **Paul Bateman**, taken from **Hollywood Directors – *Music From The Films Of Steven Spielberg*** *(SILVAD 3505)* and ***Cinema Century*** *(FILMCD 180)*

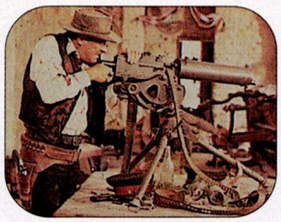
TRIPLE Oscar winner Williams holds down lucrative franchises with Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, the twin creative peaks who recruited him once more for *Raiders*. In keeping with the movie's winning mix of retro heroism and all-American derring-do, Williams brews up a rousing orchestral romp.

SPIELBERG's first choice for Indiana Jones, Tom Selleck, might have made a suitably macho-but-sensitive hero, but *Raiders*' finest moment wouldn't have existed without a trouser-soiling burst of diarrhoea suffered by the noble Ford. Desperate to shorten his encounter with a scimitar-wielding bad guy, Ford suggested he just pull his gun and shoot him – cut to the biggest laugh in the movie.
CIC/Sony video

7. THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN 1960 [5.49]
Composed by **Elmer Bernstein** Performed by **The City Of Prague Philharmonic**, conducted by **Paul Bateman**, taken from ***Westerns!*** *(SILVAD 3503)* and ***Cinema Century*** *(FILMCD 180)*

A ONE-time dancer and bebop jazzer, Bernstein brings fleet-footed syncopation and unusually prominent percussion to John Sturges' evergreen revenge Western.

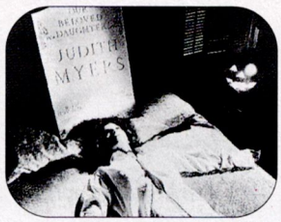
McQUEEN's breakthrough movie was rife with tales of onset rivalry between both Steve and the other youthful actors (Coburn, Vaughan) – who nicknamed the singleminded actor "Tricky Dick" – and Steve and Brynner, the established "name" star. Knowing that the King of Siam was lost on the prairie when it came to horses and guns, Tricky Dick "taught" Brynner a straightforward holster draw, leaving the megastar-in-waiting free to dazzle audiences with a flashy, camera-friendly technique that he'd saved for himself.
MGM/Warner Home Video



8. THE WILD BUNCH 1969 [6.47]
Composed by **Jerry Fielding** Performed by **The City Of Prague Orchestra**, conducted by **Nic Raine**, taken from ***Cinema Century*** *(FILMCD 180)*

BEFORE his premature death in 1980, aged just 58, Pittsburgh-born Fielding penned the scores for more than a dozen movies, mostly cop and crime thrillers. This "Train Montage" sequence for Peckinpah's majestic Old West bandit epic is a genius timebomb of slow-release tension.

PECKINPAH's ode to the savage West never puts a foot wrong – with an ageing, note-perfect cast led by William Holden, Robert Ryan, Edmond O'Brien and Ernest Borgnine. Who knows what this masterpiece would've been like if a bunch of earlier casting possibilities had signed on the bottom line? Imagine Jimmy Stewart as Pike Bishop, Richard Harris as Deke Thornton, scratchy-voiced comedy sidekick Andy Clyde as Sykes and, erm, Sammy Davis Jr as Dutch Engstrom.
Warner Home Video



9. HALLOWEEN 1978 [2.26]
Composed by **John Carpenter** Performed by **Daniel Caine**, taken from ***Halloween: The Best Of John Carpenter*** *(FILMCD 113)*

ANOTHER self-penned synthesiser creation by director John Carpenter, this time a bold excursion into ambient minimalism to suggest the creeping menace of a homicidal psycho-slasher haunting the shadowy corners of Stateside suburbia. The low-key broodiness hovers constantly on the edge of dissonant, wrenching violence.

FORGET about Jason Voorhees – there'll never been a scarier knife-wielding maniac than The Shape, as performed by Carpenter's co-writer, Nick Castle. Even more horrifying than The Shape's white-faced teen-slicing antics is the dark secret lurking behind his ghastly appearance. Carpenter's shoestring costume department had to spray-paint the cheapest, nastiest prop they could find to disguise Castle's handsome mug: a William Shatner mask.
PolyGram video

10. PSYCHO 1960 [7.22]
Composed by **Bernard Herrmann** Performed by **The City Of Prague Philharmonic**, conducted by **Paul Bateman**, taken from ***Torn Curtain: The Classic Film Music Of Bernard Herrmann*** *(FILMCD 162)*

BEST known for his long-running associations with Hitchcock and Welles, Herrmann was a former child prodigy and demanding perfectionist whose work outside of movie scores included operas and ballets. Most of his film work was minimal and jarring, and never more so than this heart-stopping explosion of sonic terror for Hitch's sick murder masterpiece.

CONTRARY to popular movie legend, Hitchcock himself (and not title sequence designer Saul Bass) directed the gruesome shower scene (although Bass *did* provide storyboards). Anthony Perkins, on the other hand, *doesn't* actually appear: the 90-shot chocolate syrup-for-blood sequence was filmed while he was in New York preparing for a play.
CIC/Sony video

11. A CLOCKWORK ORANGE 1971 [5.37]
(9th Symphony, 4th movement abridged) Composed by **Ludwig van Beethoven** Performed by **Mark Ayres** taken from ***The Cult Files: Re-Opened*** *(FILMXCD 191)*

STANLEY Kubrick had used classical music to huge acclaim as a backdrop to waltzing spaceships in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In his controversial adaptation of Anthony Burgess' future-shocker, however, he played Beethoven's fanfares against horrific violence, seedy sex and brutal psychological conditioning.

FEW scenes in this movie are more visually unsettling than Alex's re-conditioning at the hands of the powers-that-be, in which the ex-Droog's eyes are clamped open by surgical "lid locks". In a typical act of movie-making fanaticism, Kubrick persuaded Malcolm McDowell to let his eyes be anaesthetised so that the obsessive director could get the perfect shot. End result: one badly scratched cornea for McDowell.
Not legally available in the UK

12. TAXI DRIVER 1976 [8.00]
Composed by **Bernard Herrmann** Performed by **The City Of Prague Philharmonic**, conducted by **Paul Bateman**, taken from ***Torn Curtain: The Classic Film Music Of Bernard Herrmann*** *(FILMCD 162)*

PERSUADED back to work by superfan Martin Scorsese, Herrmann delivered a suitable epitaph-like swansong for this all-time classic of urban psychosis; he never got to see the finished film, dying in his sleep shortly after completing his recording duties. Jazzy, dark and more muted than most of his earlier scores, this unsettling theme is a beautifully low-key evocation of a slowly unravelling mind.

THE oft-imitated "You talkin' to me?" sequence was 100 per cent ad-libbed by long-time Scorsese collaborator and American acting dynamo Robert De Niro. The mind boggles as to how this vibrant, film-defining scene, full of confused, shattered emotion, would have played if an earlier studio had cast their ideal Travis Bickle: Neil Diamond.
Columbia/Sony

13. THE UNTOUCHABLES 1987 [2.22]
Composed by **Ennio Morricone** Performed by **The City Of Prague Philharmonic**, conducted by **Paul Bateman**, taken from ***Thrillers!*** *(SILVAD 3504)* and ***The Mission*** *(FILMCD 171)*

A FANNISH act of homage on director Brian De Palma's part, perhaps, but the grey-templed Italian maestro delivered one of the most throbbingly potent scores of his autumn years for this knowingly retro gangster epic from 1987. Crashing in over the superlative titles sequence and at key points in the blood-soaked drama, this is Morricone at his florid, operatic, crescendo-heavy best.

THE gangster epic that Bob Hoskins received $200,000 for not appearing in (after De Niro said yes to playing Al Capone) is layered with De Palma's trademark visual homages/rip-offs. Not only do some sequences borrow heavily from Hitchcock's *Foreign Correspondent*, the train station climax owes a huge debt to Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*.
CIC/Sony video

14. ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 1976 [3.00]
Composed by **John Carpenter** Performed by **Daniel Caine**, taken from ***Halloween: The Best Of John Carpenter*** *(FILMCD 113)*

AN EARLY gem from John Carpenter's self-composed scores, this time with brooding strings and hissing percussion beefing up one of his first experiments with ground-breaking electronic noise. An appropriately spare, unnerving accompaniment to his 1976 thriller about a gang raid on a besieged LA police station conducted with eerie stealth and super-silenced firearms.

NOT only did John Carpenter write and direct this bleak, super-violent homage to *Rio Bravo*, he composed the score and supervised the laser-sharp editing (under the pseudonym John T Chance, John Wayne's character in the Howard Hawks original). After rattling off Carpenter's hyper-stylised dialogue with sardonic, screen-commanding ease, burly Darwin Joston (Napoleon Wilson) fell off the movie map until he re-surfaced in 1995 as a location driver for the crew of *The American President*.
PolyGram video

15. THE IPCRESS FILE 1965 [4.01]
Composed by **John Barry** Performed by **The City Of Prague Philharmonic**, conducted by **Nic Raine**, taken from ***Thrillers!*** *(SILVAD 3504)*

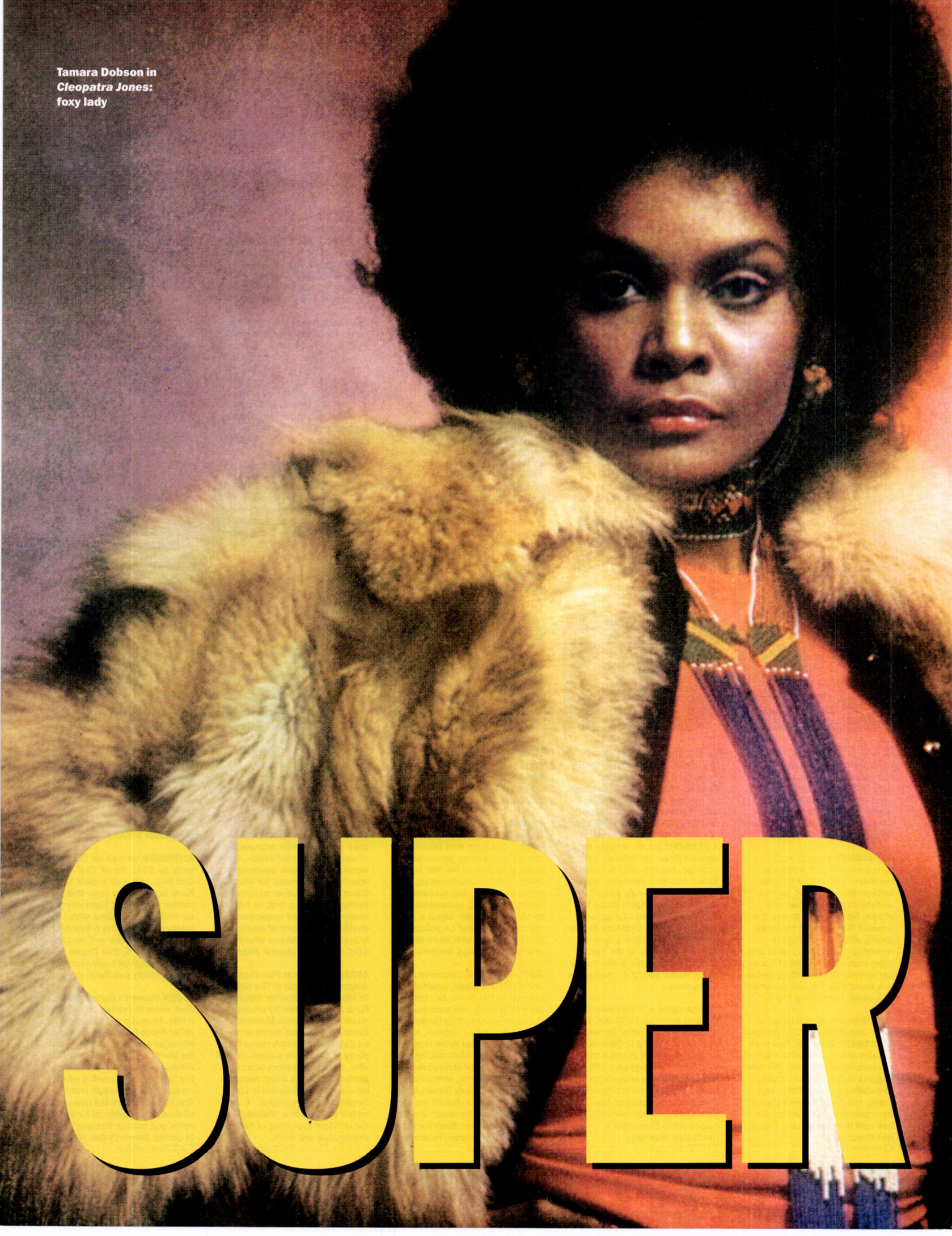
WHEREAS his Bond themes were romping, virile expressions of national self-confidence, Barry tapped into a more downbeat late-Sixties sourness for Michael Caine's Harry Palmer espionage thrillers. This, the first, is full of lonely twangs and suspicious shuffles, the sound of emotionally numb Cold Warriors who can't trust even their closest friends.

AFTER Christopher Plummer dropped out to star in *The Sound Of Music*, jazzy director Sidney J Furie fell on his feet by casting the much-more-suitable Michael Caine. Not only did the near-sighted Caine's trademark specs complement the movie's down-at-heel vibe, the working class actor suggested "Harry" as a first name for his character (unnamed in Len Deighton's original novel). Execs added the surname "Palmer" and the diffident everyman of British intelligence was born.
Carlton Home Entertainment

16. VERTIGO 1958 [5.07]
Composed by **Bernard Herrmann** Performed by **The City Of Prague Philharmonic**, conducted by **Paul Bateman**, taken from ***Torn Curtain: The Classic Film Music Of Bernard Herrmann*** *(FILMCD 162)*

ALTHOUGH he won an Oscar as early as 1941 for *All That Money Can Buy*, and also scored *Citizen Kane* in the same year, this thriller was one of Herrmann's earliest collaborations with Hitchcock. As befits a tale of fractured romance and magnificent obsession, this theme is a lavish orchestral confection with frayed, mildly psychotic edges.

JIMMY Stewart's darkest film was shot under the rather more explicit title, *From Among the Dead* (after Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac's source novel, *d'Entre les Morts*, written specifically for Hitchcock to adapt). Produced at the height of Hitchcock's most creative phase, *Vertigo* was the first film to feature the now-clichéd combination of forward zoom and reverse tracking, used to convey Stewart's fear of heights.
CIC/Sony video



Tamara Dobson in *Cleopatra Jones*: foxy lady

SUPER

COOL

Corbis/Everett

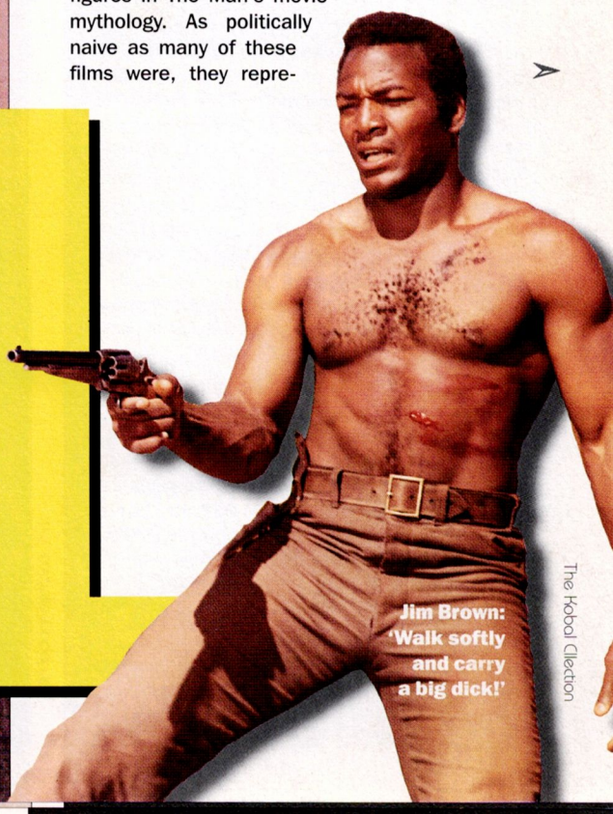
Next month, Quentin Tarantino re-launches the career of Blaxploitation star PAM GRIER in *Jackie Brown*. Here, Stephen Dalton looks back on the genre and talks to Grier and MELVIN VAN PEEBLES, while Chris Roberts *digs* those funky soundtracks

BLAXPLOITATION: THE MOVIES

SUPERFLY guys in kinky Afros. Kung-Fu babes in hot pants. Pimps in bell bottoms and bitches packing heat. Blaxploitation's trashy iconography is burned into the popular psyche like a garish Seventies acid flashback. But behind this butt-kicking cartoon image lies a revolutionary upheaval in film history: for the first time, black directors, writers and producers were telling their own stories, however lurid and stereotyped. Blaxploitation, in movie terms, was payback time.

Many commentators, black and white, dismiss the Blaxploitation era as merely a white-dominated cash-in on fleetingly hip black culture. In fact, however cheap and formulaic most Blaxploitation productions were, they provided an unprecedented showcase for black talent.

It was the growing demand for contemporary black stories that was chiefly being exploited, not the performers themselves. Blaxploitation meant African-American characters were no longer fringe figures in The Man's movie mythology. As politically naive as many of these films were, they repre-



Jim Brown: 'Walk softly and carry a big dick!'

The Kobal Collection

sented an evolutionary leap forward in black consciousness and opened the floodgates, albeit slowly, for the torrent of black film-makers and stars of the Eighties and Nineties.

The Blaxploitation archetype was defined by *Cotton Comes To Harlem* (1970), a ghetto crime caper based on a Chester Himes novel. But most purists trace the genre's true origins to *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), an incendiary revolutionary fable by renaissance all-rounder Melvin Van Peebles.

After *Sweetback* proved there was a lucrative market for white-bashing, Afro-topped, bell-bottomed action flicks, Hollywood inevitably cashed in with sanitised thrillers such as *Shaft* (1972). Although the most famous mainstream Blaxploitation film, this is also the most distrusted by black commentators. Its hero, after all, was a cop – The Man personified.

"*Shaft* simply adhered to the cliché-ridden conventions of the hard-boiled whyte boys of pulp fiction," argues Darius James in his book, *That's Blaxploitation*. "Doesn't the exploitation of the black ticket-buying public begin with the release of *Shaft*?"

But with Blaxploitation riding high at the box office, black performers found ways of turning studio opportunism to their advantage.

Fred Williamson, one of the genre's most enduring stars and founder of his own production company, Po' Boy, explains: "My idea was to let Hollywood make me a marketable commodity, then to take that commodity away from them and continue it to my own benefit."

As it ran dry of hackneyed pimp-and-pusher themes, Blaxploitation colonised other movie genres. There were black Westerns like *Thomasine And Bushrod* (1974), plus brazen horror remakes such as the *Exorcist*-clone, *Abby* (1972), *Blacula* (1973) and *Blackenstein* (1973). Meanwhile, karate black belt Jim Kelly became a short-lived "black Bruce Lee" after his supporting role in *Enter The Dragon* (1972).

Although Blaxploitation lost momentum in the mid-Seventies, it never completely died. The Eighties saw a major revival fuelled by the rise of video and, especially, the new black consciousness of rap music. Carl Weathers gave the genre a straight-faced update as *Action Jackson* (1986), while Keenen Ivory Wayans affectionately parodied it in *I'm Gonna Get You Sucka!* (1988).

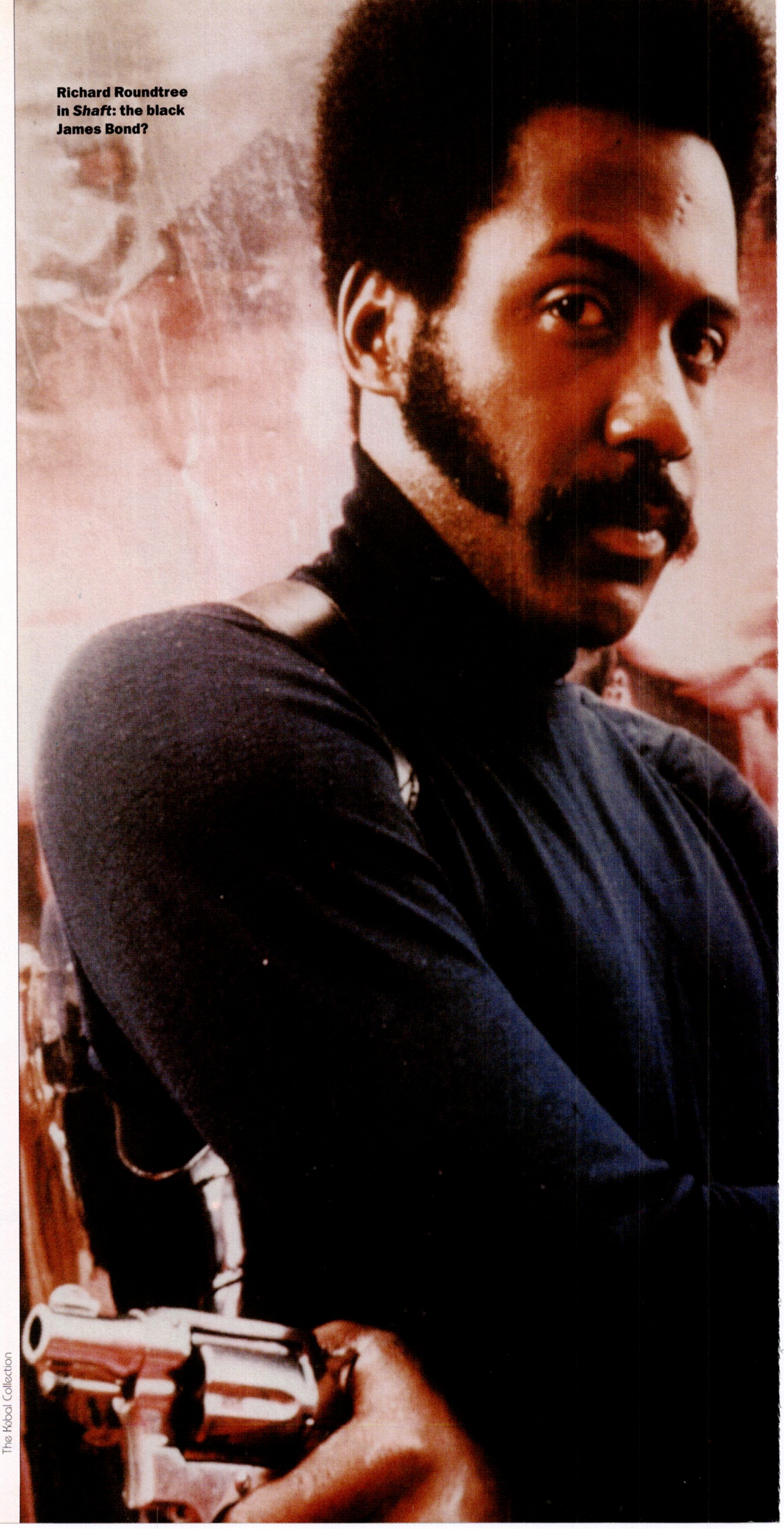
In the Nineties, a new generation of African-American directors, schooled on Blaxploitation, gave the genre a fresh overhaul. Spike Lee, John Singleton and the Hudlin and Hughes brothers have all appropriated Blaxploitation riffs. Mario Van Peebles, son of Melvin, wrote and directed the slick narco-cop flick, *New Jack City* (1991). Veteran Blaxploitation director Larry Cohen even reassembled Grier, Williamson and Jim Brown for his wryly nostalgic revenge thriller, *Original Gangstas* (1996).

Meanwhile, mainstream white directors including Tim Burton, John Carpenter and – especially – Quentin Tarantino have all incorporated Blaxploitation allusions into their recent work. Which brings us back to Pam Grier, star of *Jackie Brown*: not Tarantino's usual magpie patchwork of post-modern kitsch, but a mature, affectionate homage to Grier's funky charms.

We might well expect a full-scale Blaxploitation revival in the wake of *Jackie Brown*. Except that Grier's spiritual offspring – Angela Bassett, Samuel L Jackson, Wesley Snipes, Denzel Washington, Will Smith and Morgan Freeman – already rank among the biggest box-office names of the Nineties.

Blaxploitation never died. It just became the motherfucking mainstream, sucker.

Welcome, then, to *Uncut*'s guide to the essential Blaxploitation movies . . .



Richard Roundtree in *Shaft*: the black James Bond?

The Kobal Collection

Corbis/Everett

SWEET SWEETBACK'S BAADASSSSS SONG

(Directed by Melvin Van Peebles, 1971)

Dedicated to "all the Brothers and Sisters who have had enough of The Man", this ground-breaking study of a renegade hardman returning to the ghetto to "collect some dues" grossed an impressive four million dollars and even had an entire issue of Huey P Newton's *Black Panther* magazine discussing its revolutionary implications.

FUNKY FACT: **Van Peebles reportedly conceived the film during a frenzied wanking session in the Mojave desert.**

SHAFT *(Gordon Parks, 1971)*

The first official studio Blaxploitaion movie. Dismissed by many as a Whitey cash-in, but a stylish and punchy "black James Bond" thriller all the same. Spawned two lame sequels and a short-lived TV series.

FUNKY FACT: **Drew 'Burundi' Brown, who plays a bodyguard, was a former trainer to Mohammad Ali and credited with coining the phrase, "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee".**

SUPERFLY *(Gordon Parks Jr, 1972)*

Made by the *Shaft* director's son, this terrific ghetto fable about a morally troubled coke-pusher trying to escape his brutal surroundings is widely regarded as the shining pinnacle of Blaxploitation. Shot on a minuscule budget, the movie made more than six million dollars at the box office, while Curtis Mayfield's superlative soundtrack topped the US album charts for five weeks.

FUNKY FACT: **Parks cast genuine Lower East Side gangsters in cameo roles in return for filming on their turf.**

HIT MAN *(George Armitage, 1972)*

Not exactly prime Blaxploitation, but a curious all-black remake of Mike Hedges' British gangster flick, *Get Carter*. Walking fashion holocaust Tyrone Tackett (Bernie Casey) guns down half of LA to avenge his murdered brother.

FUNKY FACT: **The celebrated "You're a big man but you're out of shape . . . " line from *Get Carter* translates as, "You're a big cat, but don't try to sell me no wuss tickets." No, really.**

DOLEMITE *(D'Urville Martin, 1972)*

Pudding-faced, X-rated nightclub comic Rudy Ray Moore is an acquired taste, as subtle album titles like *This Pussy Belongs To Me* attest. This was the first of his amateurish action comedies, which remain a huge cult with African-American audiences. Battling corrupt cops and white drug lords with wooden wit and clumsy limbs, the black Roy Chubby Brown makes a highly unlikely hero.

Corbis/Everett

FUNKY FACT: **The Chuck Norris karate school is namechecked in the credits.**

BLACK CAESAR *(Larry Cohen, 1973)*

Fred Williamson plays Tommy Gibbs, a Harlem smack lord who "tries to be a white man and fails" when his empire implodes around him. Part black *Godfather*, part remake of Prohibition classic *Little Caesar*, with a fantastic James Brown soundtrack.

FUNKY FACT: **Williamson once owned 150 pairs of custom-made white shoes.**

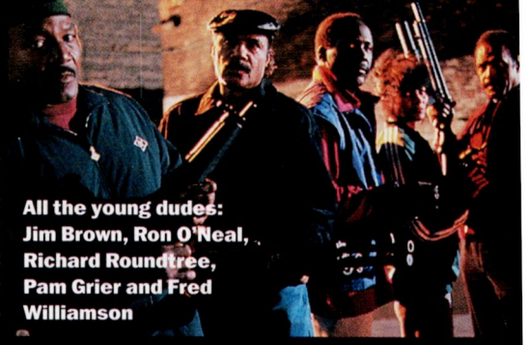
COFFY *(Jack Hill, 1973)*

In the first and best of her high-kicking vigilante roles, Pam Grier plays a two-fisted nurse taking grisly revenge on the dealers, corrupt cops and slime-ball politicians who are destroying the 'hood. Sexy, stylish and still refreshingly violent.

FUNKY FACT: **Grier spent some of her childhood on an American airbase near Swindon, returning to the US with a British accent. Ooo-arr.**

Cleopatra Jones: a glossy, airhead thriller

The Moviestore Collection



All the young dudes: Jim Brown, Ron O'Neal, Richard Roundtree, Pam Grier and Fred Williamson

The Moviestore Collection

ORIGINAL GANGSTAS

JIM BROWN

Born in Georgia in 1935, Brown was a football player turned screen sex symbol long before Blaxploitation. Films include *The Dirty Dozen* (1967), *Ice Station Zebra* (1968), *Slaughter* (1972), *The Slams* (1973), *The Running Man* (1987), *I'm Gonna Get You Sucka!* (1988), *Original Gangstas* (1996). Before converting to Black Nationalism, Brown's personal motto was reportedly "walk softly and carry a big dick".

ANTONIO FARGAS

Born in New York in 1946 to a West Indian mother and Puerto Rican father, Fargas made his name with countless cameos as rubber-limbed pimps and smalltime hoods. Best known as Huggy Bear in *Starsky And Hutch*, his films include *The Cool World* (1964), *Across 110th Street* (1972), *Shaft* (1972), *Cleopatra Jones* (1973), *Foxy Brown* (1974), *Car Wash* (1976).

PAM GRIER

Born in North Carolina in 1949, mixed-race goddess Grier grew up on European military bases and in Denver housing projects. Her movie debut was Roger Corman's *Beyond The Valley Of The Dolls* (1970), but she found widespread fame with *Coffy* (1973), *Foxy Brown* (1974) and *Friday Foster* (1975). Later screen credits include *Fort Apache, The Bronx* (1981), *Bill And Ted's Excellent Adventure* (1991), *Original Gangstas* (1996), *Escape From LA* (1996), *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Jackie Brown* (1998).

RON O'NEAL

Born in New York, 1937, but raised in Cleveland, Ohio. Taught acting in Harlem while collecting numerous acting awards on Broadway. Recruited to *Superfly* by his old Cleveland buddy, screenwriter Phillip Fenty. He then directed and starred in *Superfly TNT* (1973), a lame Alex Haley-scripted sequel. More recent roles have included *The Final Countdown* (1980), *Red Dawn* (1984) and TV cop show *The Equalizer*.

RICHARD ROUNDTREE

Born in New York, 1937. Former clothes shop salesman and model, started acting with New York's Negro Ensemble Company at Bill Cosby's suggestion. His first real screen role was *Shaft* (1972), and he later recorded an album titled *A Man Called Shaft*. More recent roles include *Q The Winged Serpent* (1982), *Maniac Cop* (1986), *Seven* (1995).

MELVIN VAN PEEBLES

Born in Chicago in 1932, Van Peebles has been a cable car operator, bomber navigator, photographer, novelist, translator, singer, astronomer, European exile, Black Panther sympathiser and prototype rapper. He also wrote and directed *Watermelon Man* (1970) and *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), as well as acting in son Melvin's *Posse* (1993) and *Panther* (1995).

FRED WILLIAMSON

Born in 1938 in Gary, Indiana. Former football player and architect, blagged his way into Hollywood via cameos in *Star Trek* and Altman's *M*A*S*H* (1970). His starring debut was *Hammer* (1972). Formed his own Po' Boy production company before writing, directing and starring in around 50 features. Extensive credits include *Boss Nigger* (1972), *The Legend Of Nigger Charley* (1974), *Three The Hard Way* (1975), *From Dusk Till Dawn* (1996), *Original Gangstas* (1996).

Truck Turner: professional and slickly-handled action

Theau Kobal Collection

CLEOPATRA JONES *(Jack Starrett, 1973)*

Former fashion model Tamara Dobson muscles in on Pam's action-babe territory as the foxy CIA agent battling sicko lesbian drug queen Shelley Winters. Written by Max Julian, who later starred in *The Mack* (1978), this glossy, airhead thriller spawned an even camper Kung-Fu sequel, *Cleopatra Jones And The Casino Of Gold* (1975).

FUNKY FACT: **Disney were recently rumoured to be planning a modern-day remake starring RuPaul as Cleo's cross-dressing son!**

TRUCK TURNER *(Jonathan Kaplan, 1974)*

Foul-mouthed, loud-suited pimp wars between bounty hunter Mack Turner (Isaac Hayes) and the entire LA criminal underworld. Professional and slickly-handled action from a young director who would later make *The Accused*.

FUNKY FACT: **Dorinda, the obscenity-spitting whore-queen in the lime green hotpants, is played by Nichelle "Lieutenant Uhura" Nichols.**

THE MACK *(Michael Campus, 1978)*

A mature, late-period Blaxploitation drama, with Max Julian playing an Oakland pimp whose capitalist methods are challenged by his black-radical brother, Olinga (Roger Mosely). Along with *Superfly*, one of the genre's most respected statements. And yes, that is Richard Pryor in the purple velour lounge suit.

FUNKY FACT: **Tarantino paid homage to *The Mack* by quoting from its dialogue in *True Romance*.**

BLAXPLOITATION: THE MUSIC

"WHO's the black private dick who's a sex machine to all the chicks?"

You only need to check some of the post-*Shaft* names – Slaughter, Savage, Cleopatra Jones, Foxy Brown – to realise the early Seventies Blaxploitation movies weren't *only* about gratuitous violence and harsh revenge for a mere few thousand years of oppression. They also revelled in a sense of fun, and – just to prove clichés sometimes ring true – great lashings of unapologetic sex. That often this was because the genre had been rapidly requisitioned by white Hollywood for simple commercial gain is fuel for another right-on thesis. What's indisputable is that the music which accompanied many of these movies (around 200 were made) latched eagerly onto the fun and sex, which is why we revere – ironically or otherwise – much of it to this day.

The breakthrough movie, Melvin Van Peebles' *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, was made for, by, and about, "black folks". *Shaft*, directed by Gordon Parks, and *Superfly*, directed by his son Gordon Parks Junior, were essentially white-coordinated extensions. Van Peebles' indie movie was concerned with civil rights and Black Power (in the Nineties his son, Mario, made *New Jack City* and, with Melvin, *Panther*). As such, its soundtrack can best be described as righteous.

Isaac Hayes and Curtis Mayfield were subsequently less motivated by the big political picture, more by specific images (crusading cops, funky junkies) and by creating soundscapes for art's (and soul's) sake. Marvin Gaye's *Trouble Man* relished the opportunity to combine the social with the sensual, and such soul masters as James Brown, Bobby Womack, Joe Simon and War didn't need to be asked twice.

The big four landmarks in Blaxploitation soundtracks would, then, be *Sweet Sweetback*, as the bizarre, bristling, pioneering effort, and *Shaft*, *Superfly* and *Trouble Man*, each of which has since transcended its source and embraced the ether of immortality.

SWEET SWEETBACK'S BAADASSSSS SONG

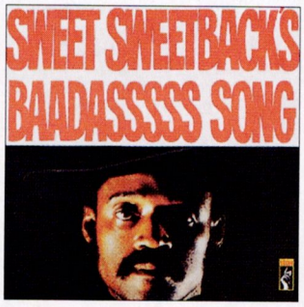
Melvin Van Peebles with Brer Soul and Earth Wind & Fire *(1971, Stax/Fantasy)*

Written and composed by the multi-talented director, Van Peebles, this is one of the oddest records you'll ever hear. These days, soundtrack albums use "snippets of dialogue", if at all, sparingly and pointedly. *Sweetback* throws them in randomly, complete with sound effects of street fights and energetic lovemaking. Track one, "Sweetback Losing His Cherry", is self-explanatory (and horribly funny). The music comes from Brer Soul and a then new, young, funk combo called Earth Wind & Fire, just formed by Maurice White. White had previously worked with Ramsey Lewis' lounge-jazz trio, and wanted EW&F to rival Sly & The Family Stone. Although his penchant for prissy slickness nixed this ambition, they were to become family favourites throughout the Seventies.

Here though, they kick it. "Sweetback's Theme", the centrepiece, is irritatingly repetitive, but insanely catchy and instant. Elsewhere, the gospel-tinged album lives up to its subtitle: "An Opera". The track

titles alone are awesome, the two best being (deep breath): "Sweetback Getting It Uptight And Preaching It So Hard The Bourgeois Reggin Angels In Heaven Turn Around", and (deeper breath): "The Man Tries Running His Usual Game But Sweetback's Jones Is So Strong He Wastes The Hounds (Yeah! Yeah! And Besides That Will Be Coming Back Takin' Names And Collecting Dues)". You have to admit those are titles.

Van Peebles' lyrics are direct and vitriolic: *"The man know everything sweetback, the man know everything/Then he ought to know I'm tired of him fuckin' with me/They burned our mamas, they beat our papas/They tricked our sisters, they chained our brothers/Won't bleed me, won't bleed me . . . "* Like I said, righteous.



SHAFT

Isaac Hayes *(1971, Stax/Enterprise)*

Hayes' legendary first soundtrack won a Grammy, while "Theme From Shaft" hit Number One in America, Number Four in Britain, and won the 1972 Oscar. His previous soul albums (*Hot Buttered Soul, The Isaac Hayes Movement, To Be Continued, Black Moses*) had established his credentials to score any imperial bedroom, but now he found the perfect accompaniment to action of the guns/Mob/drug busts strain.

Collaborating with his now regular maestros (The Bar-Kays' rhythm section and guitarists Michael Toles and Charles Pitts, drummer Willie Hall, bassist James Alexander and pianist Lester Snell), Hayes conjured up a crisp, camp paean to *"The cat who won't cop out when there's danger all about"*. Much of *Shaft* is, to be realistic, muzak. Hayes however makes only celestial muzak. "Soulsville" is delicious (he reworked this on '95's *Branded*). The 20-minute "Do Your Thing" is in a class of its own. *Shaft* is a mighty album. With its million sales and chart-topping feats, and influence on music (from S-Express to Portishead) for decades to come, it fostered more mainstream interest in black cinema than any angrier records, before or since.

SUPERFLY

Curtis Mayfield *(1972, Curtom)*

Curtis' masterpiece, it generously generated real, involving, complex songs, which floated effortlessly on that narcissistic, narcoleptic, near-falsetto. A platinum album, it saw the title track and "Freddie's Dead" become million-selling singles.

He'd only left The Impressions two years previously: this was his third solo album. His preachiness (the evils of drugs, racial oppression, and so on) was offset by the buoyancy and charm of his voice and relaxed guitar style. "Pusherman" was vaguely didactic, but "Little Child Runnin' Wild" and "Give Me Your Love" were rays of romantic sunshine. Mayfield's blending of strings and groove was practically adopted as the house style of American urban music for the subsequent decade: nobody however could match his deft touch and grace.

TROUBLE MAN

Marvin Gaye *(1972, Motown)*

This was Gaye's favourite album. The standard had been set by Hayes and Mayfield, breaking Quincy Jones' monopoly as "the" black soundtrack composer. Gaye had reservations, when first approached by Fox. He actually *liked* the films, but insecurely wondered if he could meet this challenge. Eventually he decided to "just have fun", and the result was a gorgeous fusion of jazz, soul and funk.

Motown weren't thrilled at the shortage of vocals, and the wispy structures (piano ad libs, meandering saxes), but the album sold well and has gained increased reverence over time. "T Plays It Cool" and "Life Is A Gamble" are cult faves, the former irresistibly "inventing" swingbeat. Yet it's "Trouble Man" itself which resonates with Gaye's special vocal and musical gifts. The track, dripping with attitude and laid-back sass, is the very definition of cool. *"There are only three things that's for sure"*, Marvin sang, reiterating one of his persistent themes (the other one was shagging), *"taxes, death and trouble"*. All three were to jinx him, but *Trouble Man* is further proof that he knew godliness.

AND THE REST . . .

The trashy *Shaft* sequels spawned The Four Tops' "Are You Man Enough" and Lou Rawls' "Shaft's Big Score". *Cleopatra Jones* gave the world not only Joe Simon's Baroque theme song but also Millie Jackson's "Love Doctor". Willie Hutch's themes to *Foxy Brown* and *The Mack* were influential (ask Mark Morrison), and James Brown was in footstomping form for the *Slaughter* theme, "Get Up And Ride Your Funky Soul" from *Slaughter's Big Rip-Off*, and "Down And Out In New York City" and "Mama Feelgood" from *Black Caesar*.

"Time Is Tight", the ubiquitous Booker T & The MGs cut, featured in *Uptight*, while Bobby Womack's surging "Across 110th Street" has regained favour in recent months, cropping up over the credits of *Jackie Brown*. Barry White, Donald Byrd, Melba Moore and Roy Ayers were among those who bought a bandwagon ticket with pride.

Some stonking new compilations catch the buzz rather well. The Global label's *Blaxploitation* series consists of epic double-CD collections which will bestride your lobes like a colossus, mixing the familiar with the pungently obscure to stirring effect. MCI's *Bad Muthas* is also essential (Gaye, Hayes, Mayfield and "Sweetback" are all present and correct). And the imminent EMI release, *The Big Score*, is a lust-riddled monster (granting overdue props to Barry White's "Theme From Together Brother" and an extended "Car Wash" from Rose Royce).

It's not just about funk, this big music. It's about heroism, which is why it stands apart from the pack today. The films were hokum, but offered up a kind of hope. The music they inspired is, at its best, nothing short of holy. "You're damn right . . . "

Chris Roberts

THE BIRTH OF COOL

PAM GRIER

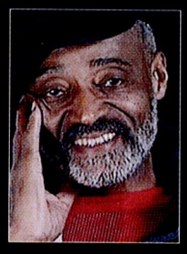
The Amazon queen of Blaxploitation epics like *Coffy* (1973), *Foxy Brown* (1974) and *Friday Foster* (1975). Recently seen in *Mars Attacks* (1996) and *Escape From LA* (1996), she also recently became a born-again screen queen in Quentin Tarantino's latest funky thriller, *Jackie Brown* (1997)

"There would not be African-American film-makers without Blaxploitation. The Seventies was the political reward, the freedom gained for the Fifties and Sixties. Musically, spiritually, economically and politically, it was a time of exploration. *Playgirl* magazine for women, the biggest Afros, Jimi Hendrix was playing white rock and not being called an Uncle Tom. People were running through Woodstock butt naked! Orgies, wife-swapping, gender definition – all these freedoms were a part of Blaxploitation.

"I didn't see a lot of black film-makers back then. The impetus didn't come until later when, from those films, the inspiration came for the John Singletons, the Hudlin brothers, the Hughes brothers. Because their childhood heroes were Pam Grier, Jim Brown, Isaac Hayes, Richard Roundtree . . .

"When a person speaks of Blaxploitation, I always say: what is your political agenda? Blaxploitation referred to a movie that was geared for a black audience. But that term became negative, with a different political agenda – meaning a film about black culture, owned by whites. But then you have the black films produced by blacks about black culture. That's also considered Blaxploitation.

"So there isn't a definitive definition – but the good thing about it was people got into the union, got exposed to the art of film-making. It developed into true film-making without generalisation. That's what I try to tell people, because so many people perpetuate the negative stigma of Blaxploitation when, in fact, it was very positive."



MELVIN VAN PEEBLES

Prolific writer, director, musician, poet and renaissance dude. Unwittingly invented Blaxploitation style when he wrote, directed and starred in *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971). Also wrote and co-starred in *Panther* (1995), directed by his son, Mario

"*Sweetback* was not a Blaxploitation film, but it started the genre. What happened was *Sweetback* made all this money and so the studios made the style into a caricature – they took out the militant part and that became Blaxploitation.

"Those films were so immersed in black culture that Hollywood suddenly realised they could not do them without black people. Previously, films like *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner* or *The Defiant Ones* were so-called black films written and directed by whites. They were a sort of bland white take on black culture. But then people realised they needed a touch of the music, the culture, the script, even the directorial style – so they had to hire minorities to delineate the stories. Before that, it was unheard of for blacks to direct films.

"When *Sweetback* was finished, only two theatres in the entire US would show out. Then it was the largest grossing independent film up to that time! I begged everyone to come in with me, but nobody would!

"I did films after *Sweetback*, I did theatre and TV, I won Emmys, I wrote books. But as an independent it's very hard to do film after film because your pockets are just not that deep. Also, I never got a film offer after that because Hollywood froze me out and modified my formula, which became Blaxploitation. The reason *Panther* took 15 years, and I eventually got the money out of England, is because people wanted to change the ending.

"In America, money always tries to dictate content."

Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song is out this month on Xenon Video

Burgess: 'People said we really *were* charlatans, but we kept at it'

TELLIN' STORIES

TIM BURGESS on The Charlatans' turbulent career

All pics: Tom Sheehan

The Charlatans emerged from Northwich in late 1989, swept along on the surge of post-Stone Roses elation popularly known as Baggy, and their success was immediate, their first LP entering the charts at Number One. Just as immediate was the backlash. Derided by critics as bandwagon-jumpers, real charlatans, and heavily pressured by a hungry record company, they suffered depression and panic. This was followed by the incarceration and, later, the death of their keyboard-player, Rob Collins, although, happily, they soon returned to Number One with their fourth LP. With a new seven-figure deal with MCA, their new album, *Melting Pot*, is a collection of their finest recordings for Beggars Banquet. This is Tim Burgess' track-by-track guide to the record . . .

1 THE ONLY ONE I KNOW

***Single, 1990, highest chart position:* 9**

"Our first single, 'Indian Rope', isn't on the LP because that was on Steve's [Harrison – manager] own label, not Beggars Banquet. But it was an enormous indie hit. We'd been playing live for about six months, just in the Midlands, Cheshire and Manchester. It sold about 15,000 copies – we should really have printed up more, but we only thought we'd do about a thousand. Then a couple of weeks later we got our first pieces in *Melody Maker* and *NME*. I'd been waiting for something to happen. I'd been in groups before but, when I hooked up with Martin [Blunt – bass] and Jon [Brookes – drums], I knew it was the best thing I'd ever been involved in.

"Listening back to 'Indian Rope' now, it seems a bit twee, but live it was brilliant and it was our first time in the recording studio. 'The Only One I Know' was picked for the organ stabs, really – we thought it'd make people go mental at the gigs. We did the first LP, *Some Friendly*, in three sessions, at a place called The Windings, in Wales. It was a bit hippyish and I don't think we left on friendly terms. It was one of those studio bust-ups between owners and group. Rob [Collins – keyboard] and Martin were up to their tricks, smashing stuff up and that.

"We'd just started our first tour with proper promoters and we were hearing ourselves everywhere. We were in *Smash Hits* – it was mayhem. It was at Number 10 when we were at the end of the tour, and we thought we'd made it. Then it went up to Nine, so we walked out onstage going, 'Number Nine, Number Nine, we're fookin' Number Nine, us.' It was great, we really thought we were starting to *mean* something."

2 THEN

***Single, 1990, highest chart position:* 12**

"'Then' was like the second part of the first LP, where the sound had started to become more commercial. We were trying to improve and this was recorded along with 'Polar Bear', and there was an argument as to which should be the second single. Everyone was saying 'Polar Bear' and Martin walked out, and he was fucking right because it was a live favourite but we'd overproduced it, destroyed it in the studio. Martin knew that and I didn't.

"I remember going down to the pub to find him and he was just sitting there with a full pint. He'd been there for an hour without touching a drop, almost catatonic. He said, 'If that comes out, I'm leaving.'

"So we did 'Then' and it went to Number 11. Everyone complained that the vocals weren't high enough, but I think that just added to its intrigue. And it had a great groove which we perfected live later. It was like that to begin with. Everything happened so quick – we'd write songs, then record them, then get to play them live and work on them. So most things would sound better about two years after they were recorded. Most people get to do it the other way round."

3 OPPORTUNITY THREE

***Over Rising* EP, 1991, *highest chart position:* 15**

"It was all going well around this time. *Some Friendly* had gone in at Number One and, even though we were getting some stick from critics for being like The Stone Roses or whatever, with people being sceptical and saying that we really *were* charlatans, we kept at it. It used to really wind me up, but Martin was always so solid about it.

"I'd only ever seen the Roses once, before they broke, and that was when The Charlatans supported them, before I was in the band. And my main thing that night was Jon Brookes and how he was the most impressive thing I'd ever seen. Steve Harrison asked me what I thought and I said I thought The Charlatans were better than the Roses. Martin liked my leather jacket, and we got on from there. Like 'Can I be in *your* band?'

"I did come to love the Roses, though. I liked the second LP more than the first, but I thought our fourth LP, which we were doing at the same time as that, had more spirit about it. I remember going to America at the time of 'Opportunity Three', in 1991, and being a typical naive rock'n'roll-head, saying, 'Oh, we're gonna be bigger than the Pistols and bigger than The Beatles.' All this stuff was coming out of my mouth, all of it from years of reading about it all in magazines. It was just text-book shit, really, but I thought I'd get away with it because I didn't think I'd ever go there again, and no one would ever see me. And now, seven years later, it's like, 'You remember in 1991 . . . ?' Oooh, nooo. I just wanted to make a mark. I hate to think what I was like, but I always meant it."

4 OVER RISING

***From the Over Rising* EP, *highest chart position:* 15**

"This was a weird one, we had 14 mixes of this. Like the 'Guitar Up Slightly Mix', and the 'Organ Down

Burgess: 'What am I up here singing for? I only wanted to play the tambourine anyway'

Slightly Mix', it was hard to tell the difference. We actually chose the mix we wanted on the way to the video shoot for it, so we'd be able to mime and stuff. This was recorded at Konk [The Kinks' studio in Hornsey, N8] and came out on an EP, because we refused to put out another single off *Some Friendly* because we thought it'd done well enough – 'The Only One I Know' wasn't actually on the vinyl version of the LP. There was a remix of 'Opportunity Three' on the EP as well, and 'Happen To Die', which was going to be the main track, but then the Gulf War happened. You know how Massive Attack changed their name to Massive and all that? Well, we thought a track called 'Happen To Die' wouldn't get played on the radio, so we went with 'Over Rising' . . . and that didn't get played on the radio, either. But it still went to Number 15, and we got to play the Royal Albert Hall. That's when we realised that we really had a fan base."

5 SPROSTON GREEN (US VERSION)

Single remix from Some Friendly, 1990, only released in the US

"Flood [Nine Inch Nails, U2] had done the mix of 'Opportunity Three' and had done 'Sproston Green' as well, for an American single. He'd made it sound more like we did it live, toughened it up. Apparently, his girlfriend was a big fan and wanted him to work with us. 'Sproston Green' is still one of my favourites, we still use it to stop the show. We actually wrote 'Sproston Green', 'Indian Rope' and 'The Only One I Know' all in the same weekend, when Jon Brookes had gone off with his mates to Ibiza. I'd read that John Lennon had tried singing through a biscuit tin, so I drilled a hole in the top and bottom of the tin and put my mike inside, and got this 'I Am The Walrus'-type effect. I think it was a shortbread tin."

6 WEIRDO

***Single from Between 10th And 11th, 1992, highest chart position:* 19**

"In trying to keep to our word about only having one single from each album – we only thought about the vinyl version of *Some Friendly*, and 'Then' was the only one on that – we'd put out another EP called *Me In Time*, which was really hesitant and unsure. So we only had six songs for the second LP, one of which was 'Weirdo', which we were gonna scrap because we thought it was crap.

"It's quite hard to admit, but I think we almost forgot who we were. We even fell into the formatting game, and it sucked. Again Martin didn't want anything else taken from the LP, and again he was right. We really didn't want to be in the same room as each other. Thinking about it, I think there might even have been a bit of an ego problem. And then Martin lost it, lost his bottle a bit, I think, got really down. Lyrically, the whole second LP, *Between 10th And 11th*, was weird, it was like, 'Please get me out of this place' – it's why we don't really play any of that stuff live now, bad memories. We were practising in Birmingham for a start, and we were surrounded by people who kept saying how brilliant the first LP was. Everyone had got into Nirvana, too. We had one track that was 100 per cent baggy, and Flood tried to turn it into a grunge classic. We wrote and recorded the whole LP in about six weeks, because of the pressure to follow *Some Friendly*. That was another lesson we learned."

7 THEME FROM THE WISH

***B-side of 'Weirdo', highest chart position:* 19**

"We were going to put 'Tremelo Song' on, but The Charlatans have always had one instrumental on their albums, and this is it. This was the B-side of 'Weirdo', it was only ever gonna be a B-side, and it was a moment where we could be completely free. Mark, who'd been pissing blood with worry throughout the recording of the second LP – I don't think he'd ever drunk or smoked so much in his life before, because he'd been on five Silk Cuts a day on the dole – and he and Rob were just genius on this track."

8 PATROL (THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS MIX)

Remix from Up To Our Hips

"The track, 'Patrol', was done while Rob was in prison [for aiding an armed robbery]. Martin had come up with this killer riff and Steve Hillage made it sound a bit limp and lacklustre. Steve produced the third LP, *Up To Our Hips*. We got him in because we liked his eyes, that's the truth. We were suffering a bit from technofear and he said he'd help us get the sound we wanted. He'd just started the System 7 thing, but we really liked the stuff he'd done with The Orb. He was also recommended by a mate of ours, John Male, who's in Republica now, but then was in Airstream and had done some stuff with Steve and Martin Duffy from Primal Scream. We were producer-paranoid, record company-paranoid, everything-paranoid, and Steve Hillage was the gentlest man we'd ever met, and from his eyes he looked like he could tell a few drug stories, which he could. And pop stories. Anyway, Martin Blunt had this riff, but he wanted some keyboards, too. But Rob was in prison, so Martin – and this says a lot about what he's like – stayed up for three days and nights to write and learn a keyboard part. And it was a beautiful melody, too, it was even kept for the Chemicals remix. That's Martin's determination. I didn't know the Chemicals before this, but then I met them at the Heavenly Social and sang on 'Life Is Sweet' on their *Exit Planet Dust*, and they did 'Toothache' for us, and we did a track for the Help charity LP together. It's like a mutual appreciation society now."

9 CAN'T GET OUT OF BED

***Single from Up To Our Hips, 1994, highest chart position:* 24**

"I remember when this came out one journo writing that it shouldn't have been the single, it should've been 'Easy Life'. Then, a month or so later, 'Easy

Life' did come out, and the same bloke reviewed it and slagged it off! At that point I thought, 'Oh, people fucking *hate* us.' This is a dole-ite song with a positive message – like, 'Get off your arse.' It's not the same message as 'Can't Even Be Bothered'. That one had me as the protagonist and was more 'What am I up here singing for? I only wanted to play the tambourine anyway.' This was the one that proved to all the doubters that we could actually write good songs."

10 I NEVER WANT AN EASY LIFE IF ME & HE WERE EVER TO GET THERE

***Single from Up To Our Hips, highest chart position:* 38**

"I was convinced that we'd recorded this one wrong in the first place, so it was a shock to hear it on this LP and find that it worked. The whole *Up To Our Hips* LP had a sense of urgency, but also a sense of hatred. We were thinking about Rob going to prison, and we didn't know how long he was gonna get. We were thinking we had to rush the LP, finish it before he went down, because if we didn't there wasn't gonna be an LP and there wouldn't be a Charlatans anymore. He left us with a few keyboard parts for 'Feel Flows' and some other bits. He did the same when he died. I don't think he meant to, I think he just had a habit of leaving us things just in case. There are bits on *Tellin' Stories* that he didn't think were gonna be used. As far as this track goes, me and Rob were actually getting on really well at the time. You know, everyone has their fall outs, and we used to fall out a lot. But on this LP we got on brilliantly, weeks were spent at Monnow Valley [studio outside Monmouth] when there'd be just me, Rob and Dave Charles the engineer. And 'Easy Life' is really just me saying, 'You don't ever want it easy, do you' mate? It's just, "Shoot it up and go for a ride," that's you'. I also read somewhere that 'Inside-Looking Out' from *Up To Our Hips* was written by Rob about him seeing the outside from inside Shrewsbury Prison. But it wasn't."

11 JESUS HAIRDO

***Single from Up To Our Hips, highest chart position:* 48**

"Didn't do very well, and it was rushed, I think, a bit thin-sounding. But it's on this LP because it's still good pop. Strangely, because a lot of *Up To Our Hips* is quite bleak. I like the title, too, and the lyrics. I always got a lot of criticism for my lyrics, for them being nonsensical, and eventually I thought, 'Fuck it, I quite *like* them being nonsensical.'"

12 CRASHIN' IN

***Single from The Charlatans, 1994, highest chart position:* 31**

"Here we started a new thing – writing and immediately releasing, so we had two singles out, this and 'Just Lookin'', miles before the fourth LP [*The Charlatans*] came out. Beggars Banquet didn't want to do it but we felt we knew better – we were really getting back the confidence and belief we had in the first place. I remember all of us sitting around the mixing desk one midnight and doing this one, and all of us saying, 'This is it, it's a bit rough and ready but it's just right.' Then Steve Hillage came in and said, 'Well, technically it's not much.' And we thought, 'Bollocks,' and we sacked him. Well, actually, we sacked him later. He gave us eight different mixes of the LP to take home and listen to that Christmas, and we hated every one of them. So then we sacked him. It wasn't good because we wanted to get into a situation where we would always work with the same people, people we could trust. Because, on the second LP, we really felt like we could trust no one. But it worked out OK. Now we always co-produce with Dave Charles. I know the results are not technical genius, but the spirit's at full force. We put this out on Boxing Day, 1994.

"It was the start of our date thing, where we have to do things on particular days. Like, we'll do something on Mods May Day. 'Just Lookin'' came out on my birthday."

13 JUST LOOKIN'

***Single from The Charlatans, 1995, highest chart position:* 32**

"We were thinking of using 'Bullet Comes' as well, but it was on the same single as this so there was no point, really."

14 HERE COMES A SOUL SAVER

Track from The Charlatans, 1995

"By the time *The Charlatans* came out, we were supremely confident. We had a review saying we'd stopped sounding likes the Roses and started sounding like Oasis, but we knew better. We thought we'd done something like the Beasties did with *Check Your Head*, really come back. We thought, 'Well, we're never gonna get back that original euphoria, so let's just do what we wanna do.' There's quite a Neil Young, kind of country vibe to this, and it suited the situation. Loads of country songs are about struggle and survival, you know, trouble and joy, and that felt like what had happened to us over the years. The sound was right for us. We loved it and we could say something with it, and it said something about us. Which is what rock bands should be about. And the LP went in at Number One, and we knew it would, all the way through recording it. That was a real 'Told you so', and a huge relief to us."

15 JUST WHEN YOU'RE THINKIN' THINGS OVER

***Single from The Charlatans, 1995, highest chart position:* 12**

"Again that country feel. It sounds bad to say it, but I haven't been excited by any British music for ages. Pretty much everything I've liked has been American. And when I think about it, I've always been a bit like that. The reason I first started going down to Steve Harrison's record shop, Omega Music, when I was a kid, was because they sold American imports there. Before it was cool, y'know, around the time of R.E.M.'s first album. In the mid-Eighties, when it was all Heaven 17 and stuff, you had to search for something different, and I looked to America. With 'Just When . . .' we were thinking of ripping off 'Ramble On' by Led Zeppelin. We were kind of keen on them at the time. 'Toothache' was us trying to capture the spirit of 'When The Levee Breaks'."

16 ONE TO ANOTHER

***Single from Tellin' Stories, 1996, highest chart position:* 3**

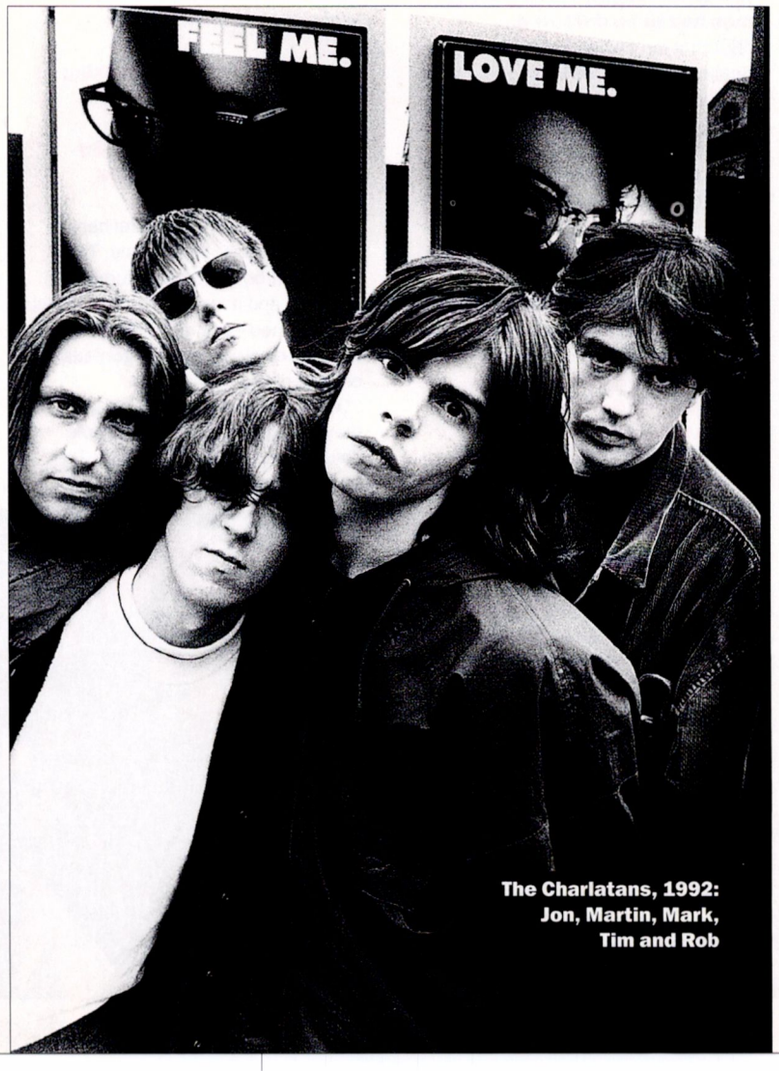
"After *The Charlatans*, we pretty much went straight back into the studio and had a session like that 'Indian Rope' one. We did 'One To Another', 'North Country Boy' and 'How High' in the same session. Brilliant. Then Rob left us again, and again left himself well covered. Again there was stuff we could use. And stuff we couldn't. He didn't like the track, 'You're A Big Girl Now', so he put bagpipes all over it, and French harmonium or something. And he ruined 'Tellin' Stories', though he left us with a good riff. And he left 'Area 51', which sounds like an alien descending from space. What a mad-head, really funny. But you have to carry on, and the next LP will be the best we've ever done. We've got three tracks already and the plan is to go in the studio in May and try to get an LP out this year."

17 NORTH COUNTRY BOY

***Single from Tellin' Stories, 1997, highest chart position:* 4**

"I've just been told that the *Tellin' Stories* LP has gone platinum, but it must've been before now. I mean, from the number of people who were staring at me in Manchester this morning you'd have thought we'd have sold millions. Maybe they only buy it in Manchester, or something. Who knows?"

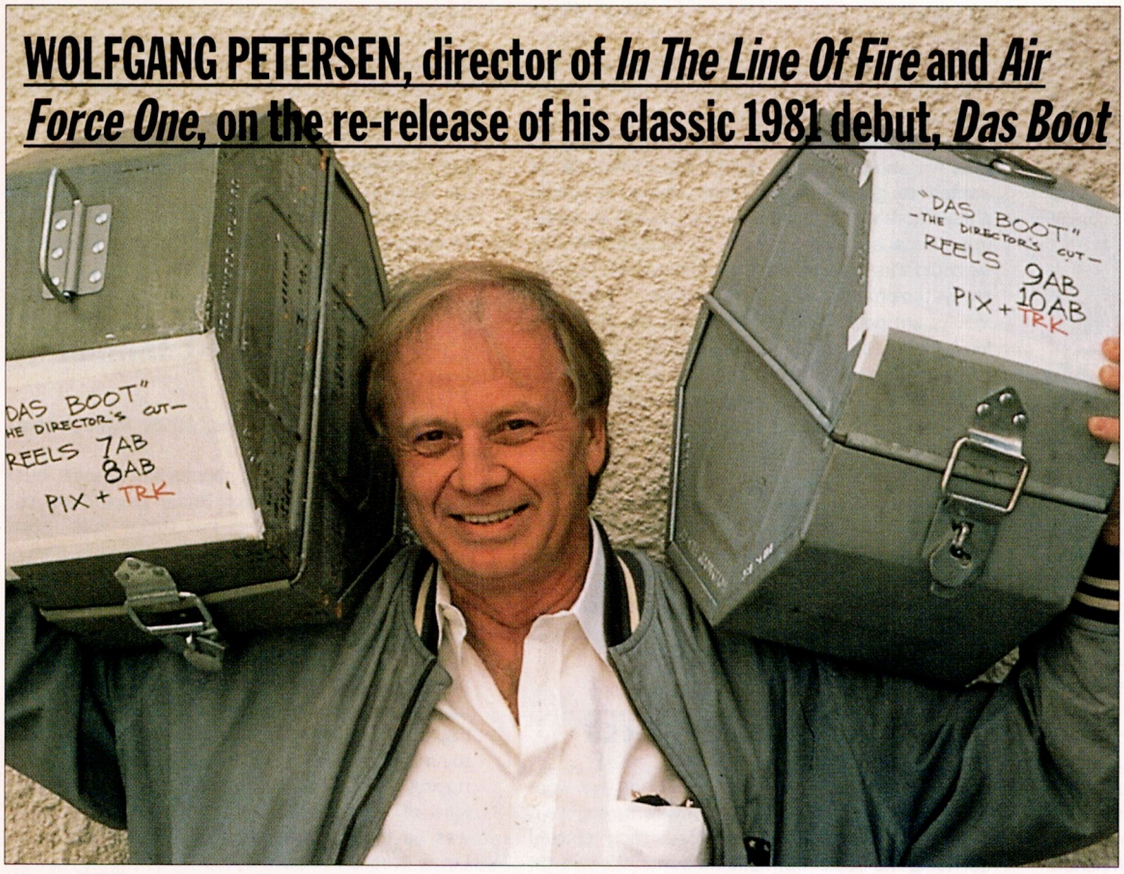
Melting Pot is available now on Beggars Banquet



The Charlatans, 1992: Jon, Martin, Mark, Tim and Rob

by David Stubbs

WOLFGANG PETERSEN, director of *In The Line Of Fire* and *Air Force One*, on the re-release of his classic 1981 debut, *Das Boot*



Michael Montfort

Why did you choose to re-cut *Das Boot* now, 16 years after its original release?

"I wanted to do it 10 years ago. I made some indications to Columbia that I was interested in doing this, but I got no response from them. Then I did *In The Line Of Fire*, which made a lot of money, and suddenly they were more than happy for me to do whatever I wanted! So I got the opportunity.

"Also, there was a commercial reason on the studio's part. They realised there's a lot of interest in reissues, laser disc, directors' cuts. And they're right. The video of the director's cut of *Das Boot* just came out in Germany and America and already sold over 250,000 copies. Even as I was making the film the first time, however, I realised that there was a better film inside the one I was making. I shot a lot of extra material."

All the changes you've made – digitally enhancing the sounds, and so on – all serve to create a sense of empathy with the U-boat men, even for those for whom they were "the enemy" . . .

"The original movie is very action-orientated, but I was always more interested in the stillness, the boredom, the tension, the silence aboard a submarine, the time when individuals' thoughts and problems come out. The film is about describing nothing else but life on a submarine in wartime. "

The film has been described as 'anti-war' – yet surely the Second World War was one that had to be fought. These U-boat men had to be defeated.

"But that isn't what the film is dealing with. It is, as I say, about life on board a submarine. And these guys, in real life as well as in the film, were different from the Nazis. They were, like, superstars in their own right, they saw themselves as superior to all that military, gung-ho Hitler shit. That was a very general attitude among the U-boat men. And Hitler didn't mess with them because he knew they were like pop stars."

How was the film received in America and Germany when it was first released?

"In England and America, the response was amazingly positive, both to the movie and the TV version. Amazing, considering that the Allies were the 'bad guys' in the film! In Germany, however, there was criticism. They hated me for this film! The reasons are twofold. The first was that 1981 was at the tail-end of the *auteur* trend in the German film industry, of small-budget movies, and *Das Boot* cost $40 million. And there were people who said, 'Hey, you could have made 20 movies with that money.'

"There was also a political reason. There were some Germans who didn't like the portrayal of these people as ordinary, sympathetic human beings. They thought it was too sympathetic. This is typical of us Germans, from high self-esteem to low. Either we are the best in the world, taking it over, or the worst in the world."

You had a fraught time making the original movie. Was it akin to *Apocalypse Now*, where the making of the film was almost as dramatic as the film itself?

"There is certainly a parallel here. It was an intense experience. The hull on our boat broke up during shooting and it looked like the project was doomed – but, as in the movie, we were saved by some ingenious engineering work.

"Also, for the cast it was hard – they became these U-boat people. They were tortured by me with 'The Whipler', a device to simulate the lurching caused by the sea's motion. They became sea-sick. They were rocked about everywhere. It was *for real* for them."

From *The Consequence*, a story about male gay love, to *Das Boot*, to *The NeverEnding Story* – your output is varied, to say the least.

"I see myself as more the John Ford-type of film-maker. I just want to tell stories. My son was 11 when I made *The NeverEnding Story*, the book seemed so beautiful – it was the right thing to do."

Do you ever get fed up with Hollywood and yearn to return to the German film industry?

"I don't think so! We all know the downside of Hollywood, but for me the bottom line is, here are where all the most professional people come to, from all over the world. The best thing to me about working on a film is the professionalism of the behind-the-scenes people. If I went back to Germany, I would be afraid of the lack of that sort of professionalism."

And that's more important for you than the end product?

"In Hollywood, I sometimes have to make artistic compromises on films with $90 million budgets. But once you make these films, they give you enormous power and leverage to do the things you really want to do. Because that's what Hollywood is really about: power. Like with the director's cut of *Das Boot*. I had the power, so they had to let me do it."

What are you working on next?

"I'm in development at the moment with a project about Ernest Shackleton, who next to Scott, was the greatest explorer of the Antarctic.

"Although his expedition was a disaster, he was a hero and a charismatic figure to the people who agreed to go out with him and whom he brought safely back.

"I'm thinking maybe he'll be played by Mel Gibson."

Das Boot – The Director's Cut is currently on release

***Das Boot*: a claustrophobic masterpiece**

Essential Webb Site.

THE CLASSIC SONGS OF JIMMY WEBB

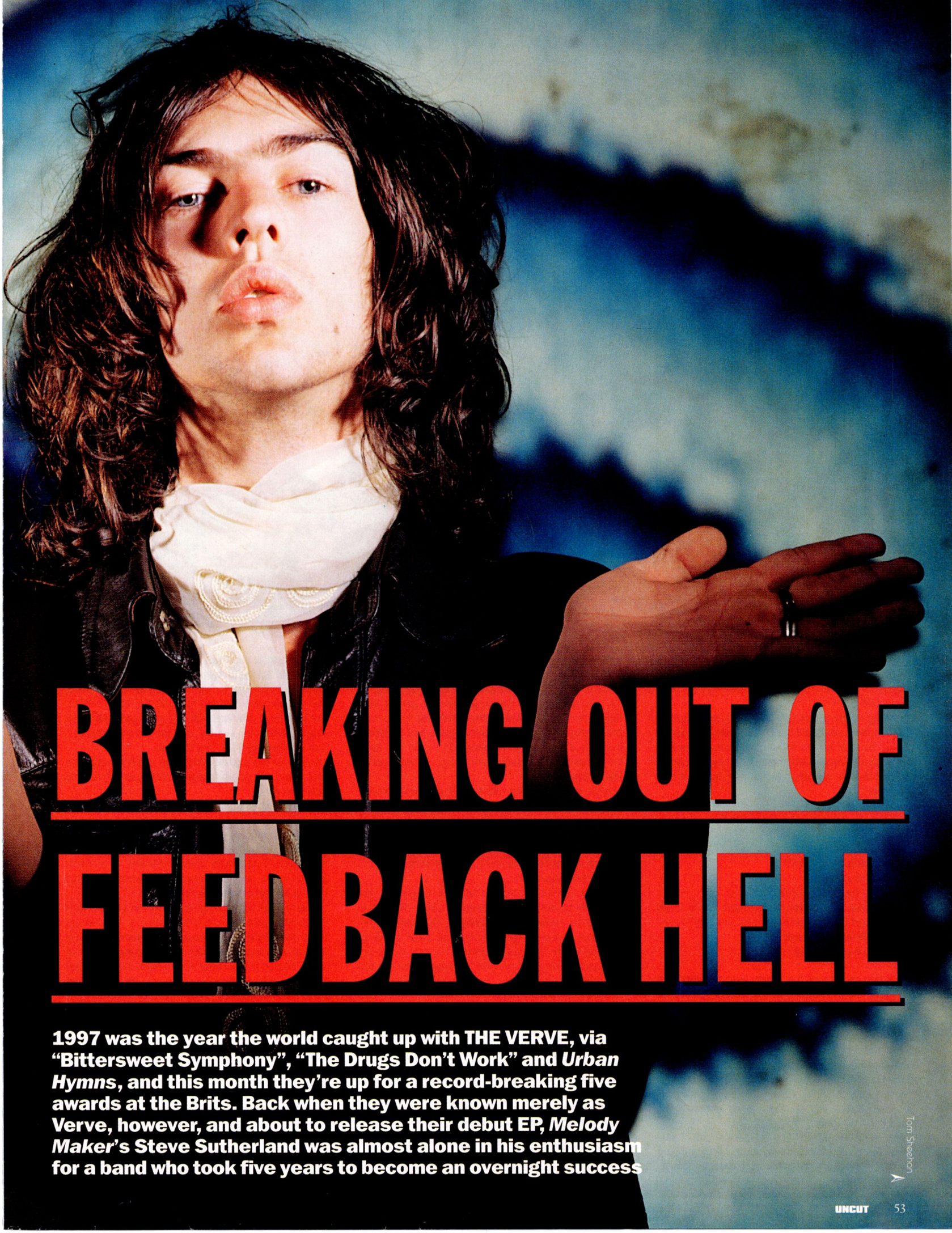
Jimmy Webb. For 30 years, one of the few truly essential American songwriters. Hailed by David Hepworth for his 'love of craft, consideration and humour.' Recognised by Max Bell as 'the singer/songwriting fraternity's answer to F. Scott Fitzgerald.' And now collected by Débutante on a new CD featuring 18 of his finest songs, recorded by the artists who made them famous.

Donna Summer - *MacArthur Park*
Four Tops - *Do What You Gotta Do*
Linda Rondstadt - *Still Within The Sound Of My Voice*
Glen Campbell - *Wichita Lineman*
Glen Campbell - *By The Time I Get To Phoenix*
Joe Cocker - *It's A Sin When You Love Somebody*
Richard Harris - *MacArthur Park*
Art Garfunkel - *All I Know*
Dusty Springfield - *Magic Garden*
Scott Walker - *If Ships Were Made To Sail*
Bill Medley - *If This Were The Last Song*
Thelma Houston - *Someone Is Standin' Outside*
The Highwaymen - *The Highwayman*
Johnny Mann Singers - *Up, Up And Away*
Jimmy Webb - *Didn't We*
Glen Campbell - *Galveston*
Glen Campbell - *Where's The Playground Susie*
Judy Collins - *The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress*

DÉBUTANTE
A Polygram Company

Available from HMV

Verve *(from left)*: McCabe, Salisbury, Jones and Ashcroft



BREAKING OUT OF FEEDBACK HELL

1997 was the year the world caught up with THE VERVE, via "Bittersweet Symphony", "The Drugs Don't Work" and *Urban Hymns*, and this month they're up for a record-breaking five awards at the Brits. Back when they were known merely as Verve, however, and about to release their debut EP, *Melody Maker*'s Steve Sutherland was almost alone in his enthusiasm for a band who took five years to become an overnight success

Tom Sheehan

Verve, The Powerhaus, London, April 24, 1992: 'Most of the time, Ashcroft's gone – somewhere exotic or ecstatic in his own head'

Pears Allardyce

"PLENTY OF KISSING . . ." RICHARD ASHCROFT IS rolling back the years. "Sign of the cross. Y'know, all that . . ."

Any good?

"Fucking magic. I was 14, just a kid, playing for a pub team and I really did think I was gonna be centre forward for Man United. All the way through the season I was playing for Upholland FC but scoring goals for Man United. Amazing goals. The Stretford End went wild."

What went wrong?

"Oh, the manager hung up me boots."

Why?

Sheepish grin.

Did you get sent off a lot?

"Yeah, all that."

Lippy little bastard were you?

"Yeah, I was. And I wasn't reaching it. D'you know what I mean? I wasn't getting there. But with Verve I can. With Verve I can reach it.

"With Verve I know I will."

WAKE UP! IT'S TIME TO MAKE THOSE DREAMS come true. I don't know why, but it feels like you've been sleepwalking for years. All those faceless bands with nothing to say hiding behind their fringes, living vicariously through their record collections, going nowhere, achieving nothing. It's as if you've been cloning complacency, cosy inside your own cool clichés.

There's been no drive, no ambition, no striving for the impossible. You've been living in apathetic limbo, feedback hell.

I was living there, too. And enjoying it until I saw Verve. Suddenly staring at my shoes and catching the odd phrase about trees or waves or clouds through a focusless guitar wash seemed dumb. No, numb.

This skinny, scarecrow guy was sort of praying to his microphone and hanging from the ceiling and falling to his bony knees and muttering to himself and confronting us with saucer eyes and insisting that it's all out there – everything – and it's ours for the taking if we really want it and . . . well, yeah, I felt reborn.

Verve aren't like the others. Verve are about the exceptional. Verve are going to be stars because up there, on stage, with an adoring audience hanging on their every word, their every crystalline note, they've created their own world within which they can, do and will be who and what they want.

Verve take you there.

Honest exhibitionism, the urge to improvise, an addiction to tension, an obsession with detail, an instinct to seduce and a stinging frustration with what is as opposed to what could be, what ought to be – all these things are already hurtling Verve so high and far beyond what we've grown used to that it's scary.

Why are Verve so great?

Because they feel it's their duty as musicians, as emerging pop stars, as human beings, not to settle for anything less than greatness. How to get there? It's no great secret. In fact, it's so ludicrously simple you'll kick yourself and whoever it was who suggested you listen to The Frank & Walters or The Catherine Wheel or any of the other bands who trade in the bleeding obvious, filling shirts and wasting precious time when there's things to be done, important things like falling in love or painting that picture or running that race or scoring that goal or discovering Verve.

You see, getting into Verve isn't a passive thing, it's a positive act. You don't stand and stare, you gawp and grin and roam around your imagination locating possibilities. You want to be in this band like you've never wanted to be in any band before. But you know you can't. Oh, it would have been piss easy to strap on a guitar and go out shoegazing – fuck, if Revolver did it, any fool can.

But Verve are such an overdose of personality, it's their band, not yours. You want this heaven? Go find your own way.

As their first EP says: *"It's all in the mind."*

SOMEDAY SOON, IF THERE'S ANY JUSTICE AT all left in the cosmos, Verve will pull up outside Manhattan's Madison Square Garden in a white stretch limo, see their name in lights and give thanks for Valentine's Day, 1992.

They'll recall with a laugh how the van got clamped in the afternoon, how they turned up at The Astoria to be refused a soundcheck, how another band on the bill was snotty to them, presumably jealous of Verve's good press. They'll remember how bad they felt when they shuffled onstage at 7.30, far earlier than they'd originally been told, to discover the doors had only just opened and their friends, who were travelling down the M1 from Wigan and the M40 from Oxford, were still stuck in traffic, miles away.

Richard will smile when he recalls smashing the bottle of vodka on stage, and he may still feel the anger well up inside when he pictures the stage manager signalling the band to cut yet another number from the end of their already amputated set. Maybe he'll shiver as he relives his defiance and his tearful rage when the plugs were pulled mid-song.

This was the night when Verve decided that enough

was enough and got back on course.

"When we were stood in the pouring rain with our equipment being herded out of The Astoria, I realised that this wasn't what it was supposed to be about. It was a turning point," explains Richard over lunchtime vodkas (he's a brandy man, a spirits man, to excess – so much more style than the lager'n' spliff brigade).

"We were gonna go out supporting The Catherine Wheel, but we immediately cancelled it. Why should we put up with all that crap? We're always telling people that we're a special band so why should people have to see us in those circumstances? Y'know, we're not an, 'Oh, they were all right but they were just the support'-type of band. We're *fucking* special and we had to do something to keep it special.

"It can't be half-hearted. Every gig has to be different, every gig has to be special, and you can't go on and do that not feeling right about the whole event. I mean, we could so easily fall into the trap of not being extraordinary, but there's things you can do to change it – you can always turn that other corner.

"I'm not looking at it in a purely selfish way. When people go to see a band, they want to know they're gonna see a good show, and that there's gonna be a good atmosphere created. We want that as much as the others who've tried to create it – y'know, The Stone Roses and Primal Scream. That's the way it should be, not being herded off. What's so special about that?

"If more bands had the attitude that they were giving people something superb and more than their money's worth, it could all take off. But there's too many bands who . . . well, y'know, they just go along with the way it is."

So, while others still won't say boo to a goose, Verve are going out on their own and only doing supports with bands they respect. I've just been told they'll be playing some dates with Ride. Maybe I've died and gone to heaven.

"MOST NIGHTS I CAN'T REMEMBER faces from the audience. If I met someone afterwards, I couldn't tell you if they were stood down in front of me. It's not a sight thing, it's just a feeling in the room, that feeling of people expecting something and knowing it's gonna be good, no shuffling around thinking, 'Oh why bother, there'll be another band along in a minute.'"

Richard's talking about the Verve experience, about the drama they create on stage. Most of the time, he's gone, somewhere exotic or ecstatic in his own head. Then there's Nick McCabe, the guitarist, concentrating on getting it right and taking it further, statuesque and disdainful. And there's Simon Jones, the bassist, who looks like a very young Richard Beckinsale, and drummer Peter Salisbury, going with the flow, feeling their way through music that Richard describes as a series of climaxes or "rises and falls".

On record, they've found this gorgeous fluidity difficult to capture. Produced by Stone Roses associate Paul Schroeder, the mythologically Doorsy "All In The Mind" touches the essence, but the rippling "One Way To Go" and especially "Man Called Sun", which is as elegantly relaxed as a cat stretching, come closer to indicating where Verve have already gone.

Buy the EP. Play it all. You won't regret it and, who knows, it may just change your life.

After all, it seems we're subconsciously feeling a lack and looking for something. Why else would we devote any time or energy to the amusing rantings of the Manics, who just can't walk it like they talk it? Some girl from *NME* actually thought Verve were gonna be all Manicmouth and no trousers, but she hadn't seen them live and they sent her away with a flea in her ear.

Silly question really, but is this a good time for Verve to be emerging?

"I think it is, yeah. From a personal point of view, I don't see any lead singers or performers any more. I can't name a really, really good one for years. The last one was Morrissey in his heyday. He was the last one that I'd say was really performing, really doing something extrovert. I didn't like the cloning, though, it wasn't individual. I'm not into that. He seemed to create this feeling of despair in his fans. They took everything he was saying too literally and he exploited them by going along with it. It shouldn't be like that.

"It's up to the bands, the people who haven't got a deal yet, the people who are writing the music. It's there for the taking. There's room for anyone now, no matter what sort of music they're doing, as long as they do it in a special manner.

"There's no main style anymore. That was proved by Public Enemy playing with Anthrax . . . I mean, how far extreme can you get? There's no boundaries now. We're in the Nineties for God's sake. The boundaries were broken 20 odd years ago.

"I don't understand these groups who impose boundaries upon what they do. How can you love your music if you don't want other people to hear it? So many bands grow up listening to indie music and that's the way they wanna be. We're not into that. We listen to all types of music, so no other band ever interferes when we're writing. Verve are 1992 – we're not picking back through the years or looking for a scene.

"Hopefully, that mid-Eighties indie ethic is gonna die a death. The whole thing about keeping yourself down and introverted is not what music should be about. Music should be ambitious. Why shouldn't someone in Australia be putting on your record? Thinking of someone in America listening to our record and thinking it's amazing while I'm in England blows my mind."

'We're always telling people that we're a special band . . . not some support-type band. We're *fucking* special, and we had to do something to keep it special' – Richard Ashcroft

Pop music is there to be reclaimed and Verve are setting about it with exuberant determination. They say death to The Wedding Present and all the other sulky revellers in underachievement. They say it's high time bands became important again.

"I don't want people picking us out of the gig guide just because we're on that night. I want it to be the *only* gig that people would dream of going to, the one they've been waiting for and thinking about," says Richard.

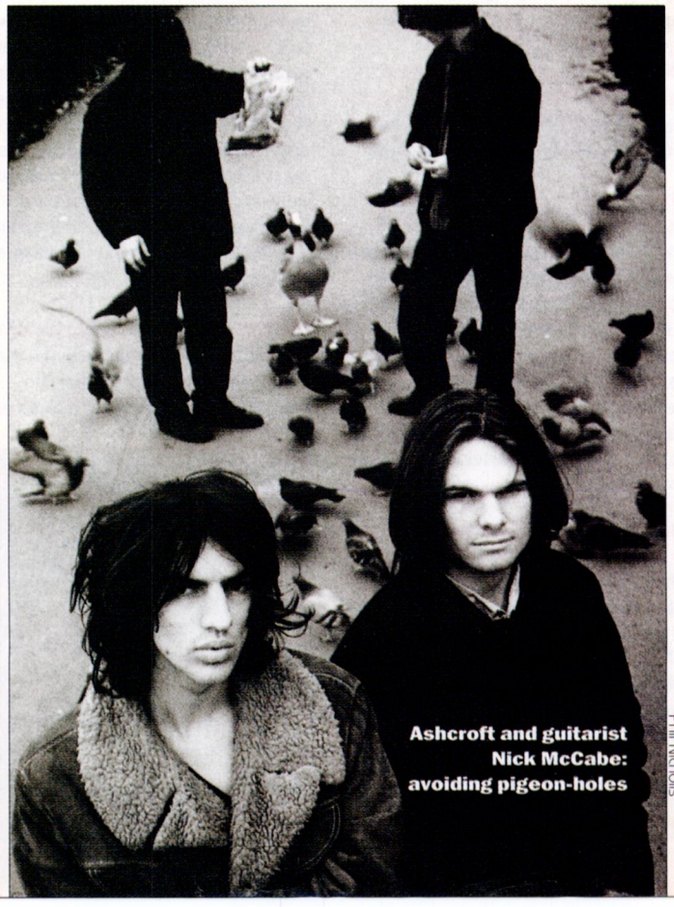
"I mean, come on, it's got to be special or what's the point? Can't you just smell the complacency? If we're really into a song that we've written and other people appreciate that, it's the greatest thing. To share something that you really like is a brilliant feeling. Why hide it? Music's about transforming yourself, elevating yourself. I mean, six months ago we were absolutely skint and yet when we went on stage, we could be anything we wanted to be in the world and when people are watching you and listening, they're not thinking about their worries and what's going on outside. They're just getting lost in it and that's how I feel.

"If we write a great song, I feel fantastic inside knowing that I'm doing something constructive with my life rather than banging my head against the wall doing something I hate. I'm not interested in the money side of it all. Money just burns a hole in my pocket. I spend it straight away. I'm not interested in getting some big foundation in my life, I'm just interested in seeing places I've never seen and having a fucking good time."

VERVE TALK EXCITEDLY ABOUT THEIR new EP and the album they'll be recording in the summer – an album that, they assure me, will be this year's very finest. They are perpetually frustrated that they can't achieve the music they hear in their heads and yet they realise that's the way it should be.

They know their vision is unique and they hope to fuck they can inspire in you some unique visions of your own.

"It's like, when I was a kid, I went to a Bobby Charlton Soccer School," says Richard. "And the first thing they told us was that George Best was a prick. Well, I wasn't having that. I mean, come on! He had two blondes before a game against Chelsea and still scored!"



Ashcroft and guitarist Nick McCabe: avoiding pigeon-holes

Phil Nicholls

This feature first appeared in Melody Maker, March 7, 1992. Steve Sutherland is now editor of New Musical Express

Speer: I was *Monty*'s double (the usual size)

HUGO SPEER

***The Full Monty* is now officially the most successful British film ever. With its video release imminent, "The well-endowed one" talks to Simon Lewis about stripping, schmoozing and Courteney Cox's phone number . . .**

The final, revelatory scene of the film is shot from behind. Did you actually get your tackle out?
"Oh yes. We didn't have anything on, literally bollock naked. And we were absolutely petrified, in front of all those women . . ."

What was their reaction?
"The crowd reaction was massive. Because, as far as I know, they hadn't been told we were going to do the whole thing. So, when we did, it was a natural response. Which is obviously a big feature of the scene – the cameras were on them and you can actually see the delight in their faces. Having been shouting, 'Get 'em off!', for several takes when we hadn't gone further than the pants, when we actually did, it was quite a shock."

You can get those modesty pads they use in Hollywood sex scenes.
"Yeah, but if you're going to embrace the whole ethic of the film, you have to do it for real, so you can feel the fear in real life."

Were you, like Gerald in the film, worried that "arousal" might occur?
"No! The opposite is probably true – winkie shrinkage is the biggest fear."

Afterwards, did you all run off in embarrassment?
"Yeah. We were supposed to count to ten and then someone would say *cut*. So I was like, 'OnetwothreefourTEN!' But because of the noise the girls were making, we didn't hear anything, so I ended up standing there completely still, bollock naked, until the wardrobe girls ran on and covered us up. But when I looked round, everyone had bolted anyway."

Did you get a taste of the reaction in America?
"Yeah, four of us did 10 days in LA. It was massive, they were going mad for it, really mad. I had the most ridiculous 10 days in my life. It was the first time I'd been there, to Hollywood, this complete mecca for me, and we were treated like gods. It was awesome. I was in shock. The first night after we got there I was having drinks with Sigourney Weaver at the premiere, and it just got stupider and stupider . . . John Travolta was in the hotel, so we chatted with him, and so it went on . . . all the cast of *Friends*, all the cast of *ER* . . ."

You got to talk to them?
"They were all over us! That was the weird thing, the *Friends* people saw us and just dropped what they were doing and ran over to us and were like, 'Oh my gaaaahd! It's the Monties! We love you!' We were getting Jennifer Aniston and Courteney Cox giving us kisses and saying they loved our movie, and we were just completely shocked. Completely shocked. Four humble lads suddenly dropped in the middle of all this and going, 'Er . . .'"

Did you get mobbed in America?
"Not actually mobbed, but when the four of us were walking down the street together there'd be people eating outside restaurants who'd stop what they were doing and start clapping and shout, 'Great movie, fellas!' It was lovely."

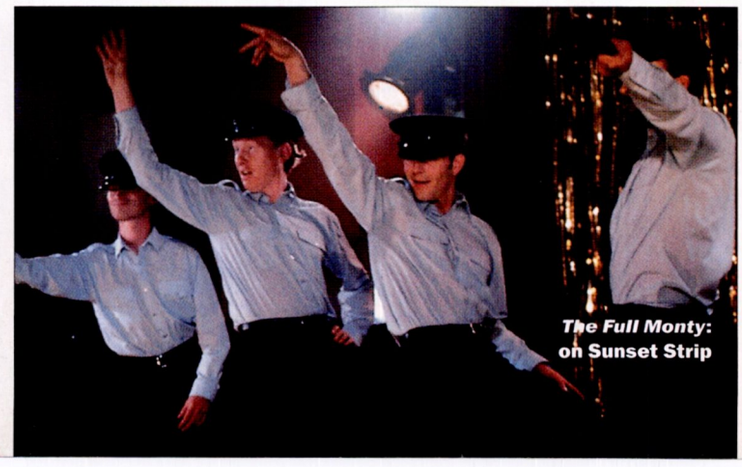
Did you develop a strut?
"Yeah, because we'd have a few beers and start slouching around going, 'Yurrr, yaaarrr,' and then suddenly realise the whole restaurant was watching us and we'd feel our spines straightening somewhat and try to act like respectable, fine, upstanding members of the community – which we obviously weren't."

Did they have any problems with your Yorkshire accents?
"Yeah, they did. Stuff like chuffin' nora and bog, they didn't know what we meant. But they had a glossary with explanations of all these words. I've got it, *The Full Monty Handbook*, and it's awful. I think some maverick bloke in New York just knocked it out."

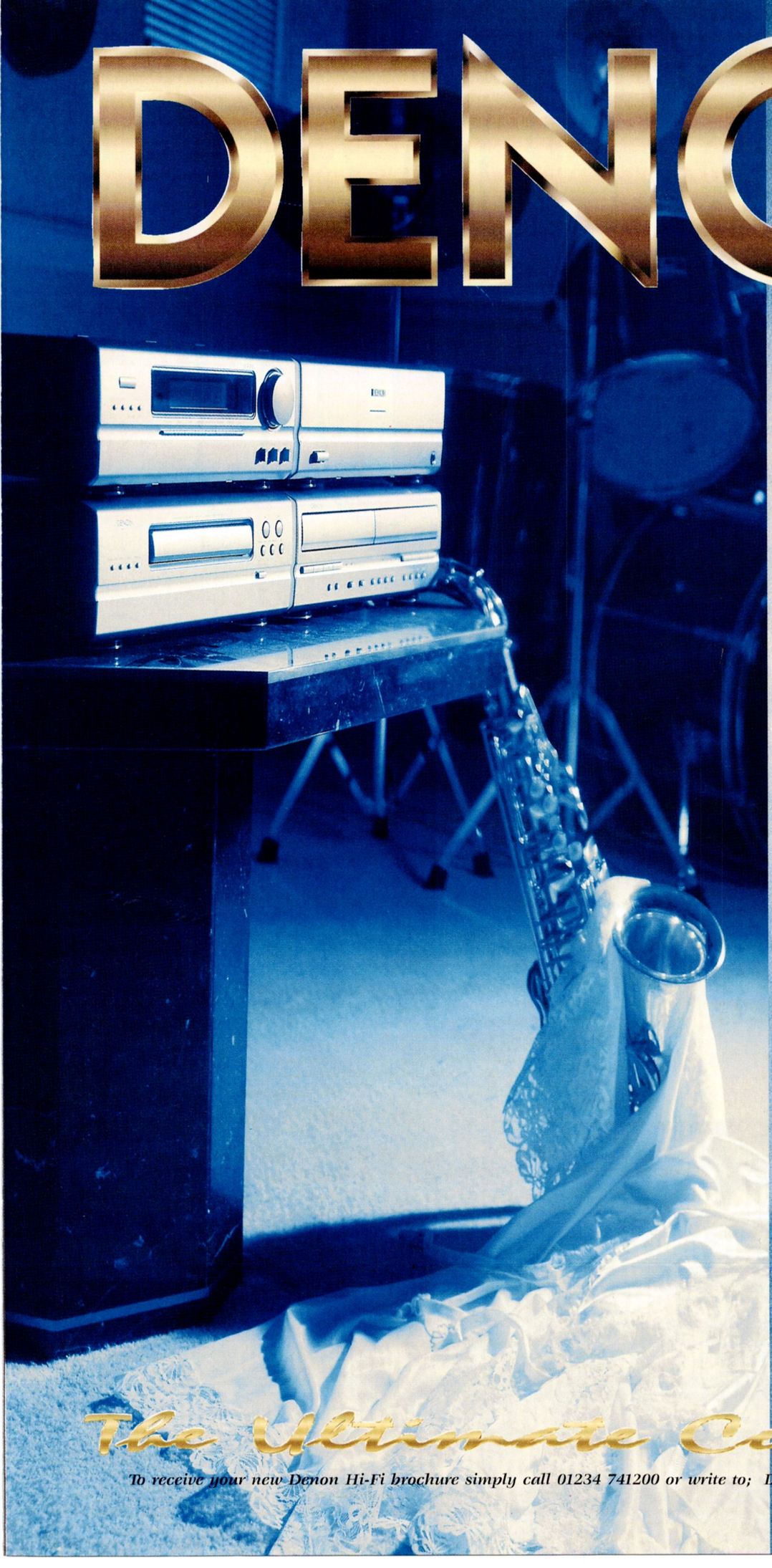
Have you made more money than you thought you would out of it?
"Yeah, we have. I'm getting a fiver for this interview, that's two beers! I'd normally have to work for an hour for that sort of money, and here I can earn it in half an hour! No, we're not millionaires, but it's all relative. I can't afford to buy a place to live or a half-decent car, really. But that's because I pissed most of it away against the wall anyway."

Didn't it feel weird for someone who can't afford a car to be mobbed by the cast of *Friends*?
"Never really thought about it. We went to Courteney Cox's house for dinner, she invited me and Mark over, and she's got a stunning house – pool and Jacuzzis in the garden, beautiful works of art all round, fantastic pool table, and you think, you know, 'All right, so the girl's got money.' But she was sweet. She seemed slightly lost or looking for something more . . . but then that's just LA, everyone's cuckoo. She was lovely, she was friendly, and I've got her phone number! But I haven't called her yet."

So would you strip for a magazine now if they offered you millions?
"Well if it was tastefully done . . . if it was a warm room and it was, you know, as long as it gets . . ."



The Full Monty: on Sunset Strip



DENON

Re-create the original performance

Denon—a world leader in audio for 85 years and the acknowledged master of digital recording and playback for more than 25 years.

Such a complete understanding of every aspect of the digital medium means that whichever your preference, the system you choose will have the sonic prowess to re-create the emotion of the original performance.

Making your choice from Denon's enviable collection of mini, micro and separates is now so easy. Simply call 01234 741200 to receive your free Denon Hi-Fi brochure.

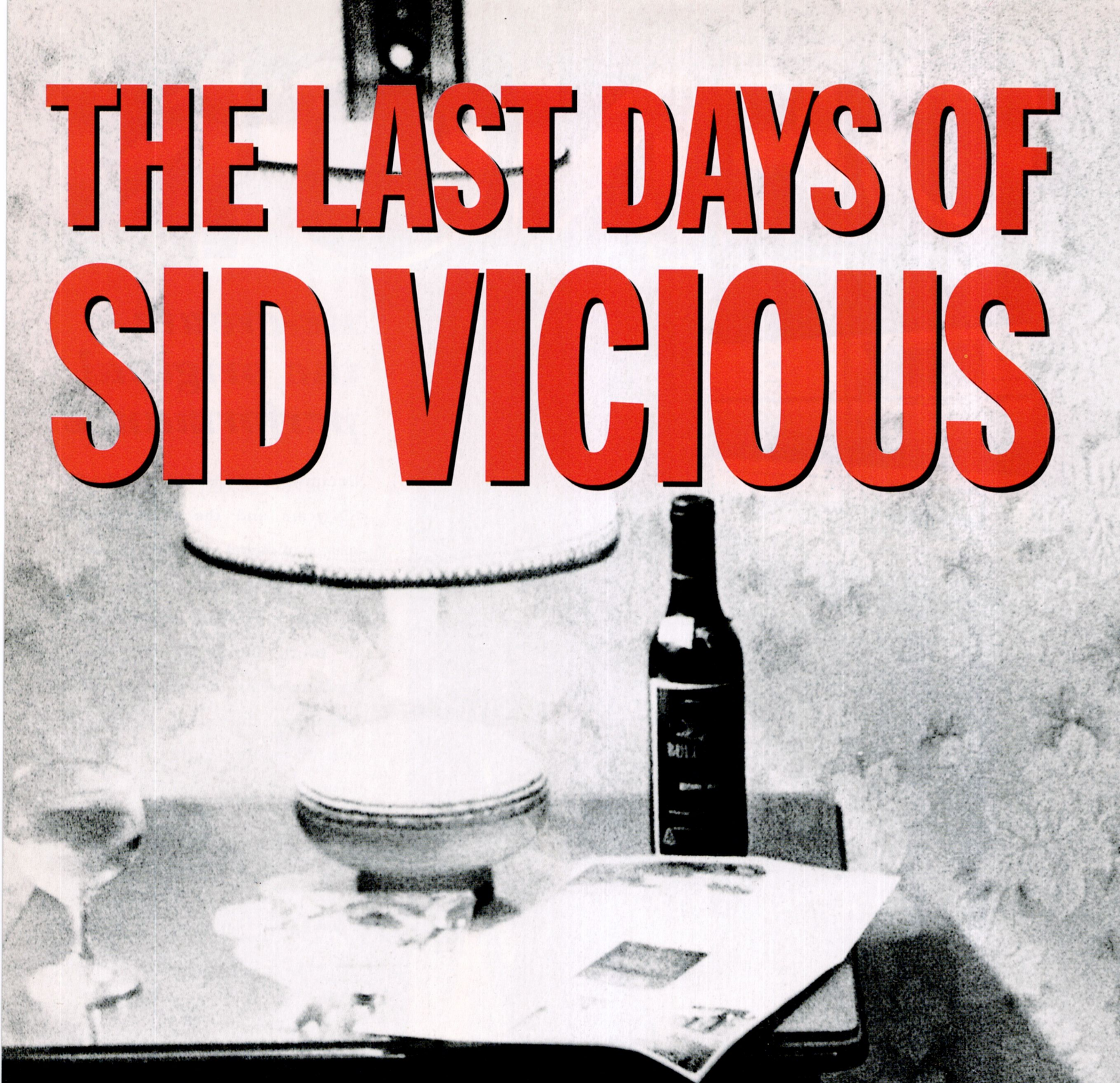
And when you are ready to hear just how good your preferred Denon system sounds, your local Denon specialist is also a mere 'phone call away.

Denon. Sonic excellence, innovative engineering and inspired design...
Now that's the ultimate collection.

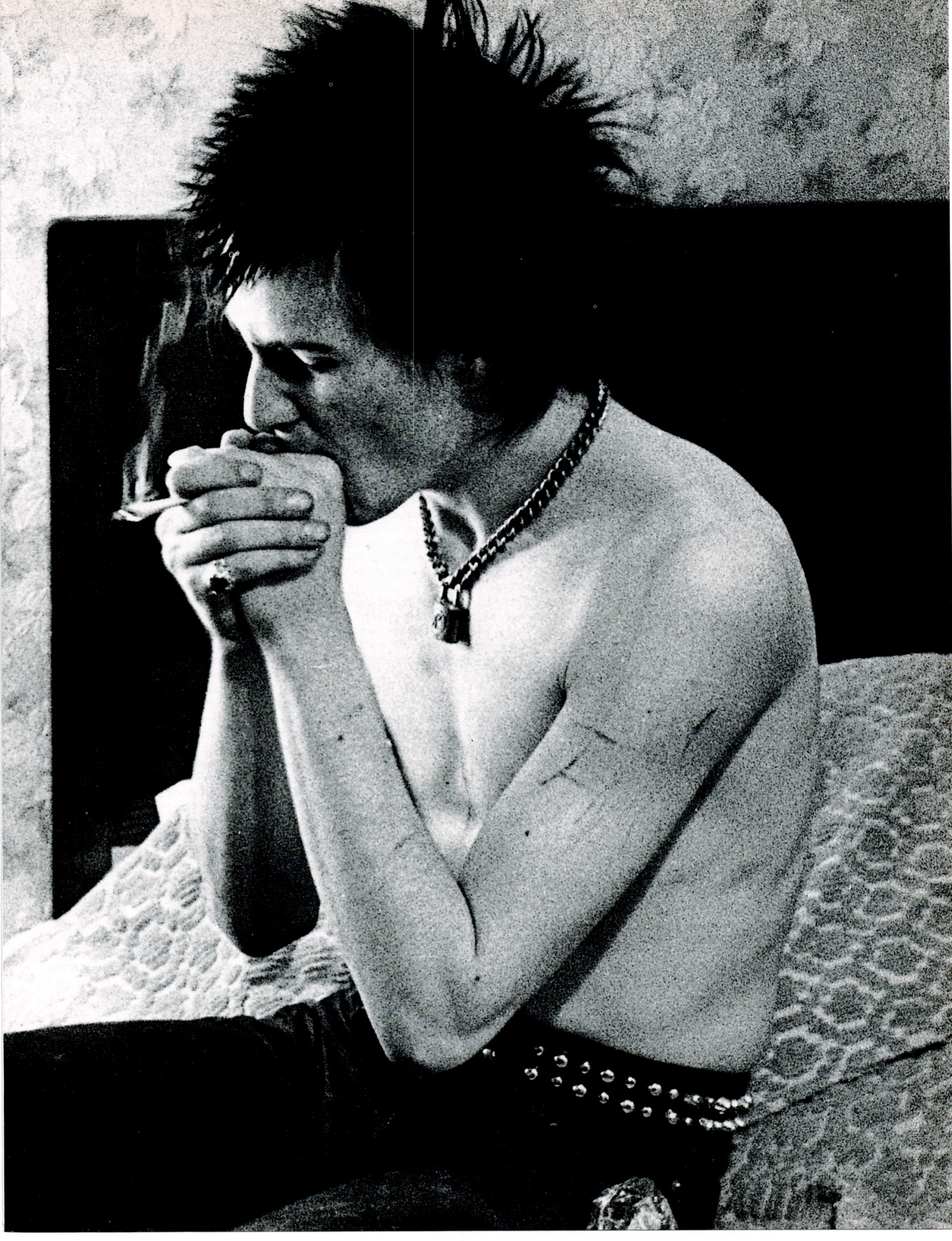
The Ultimate Collection

To receive your new Denon Hi-Fi brochure simply call 01234 741200 or write to; Denon FREEPOST, Hayden House, Chiltern Hill, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks SL9 9BS.

THE LAST DAYS OF SID VICIOUS



He was the ultimate punk icon. But from the moment he joined The Sex Pistols and began his doomed romance with Nancy Spungen, Sid Vicious was caught in a downward spiral of ferocious drug abuse and violence. Peter Gravelle, who was with Sid the night he died, was an eye-witness to it all. This is his story. Additional reporting by Allan Jones



Nancy and Sid: the lovers from Hell

Dennis Morris

LONDON, JANUARY-DECEMBER, 1977

"PEE-TAH!"

Aw, shit: Sid?

"Pee-TAH!"

Of course, it's Sid.

"PEE-tah!"

Who else would it be, standing in the street at this hour, which could be any time between midnight and daylight, the time not meaning much at all to Sid in the state he'd usually be in when he turned up like this.

"Pee-TAH!"

Must have had another arguement with Nancy, or he's looking for drugs. Probably both.

"PEE-TAAAH!"

You could try to ignore him, but it would be useless. He'd stand there all night, banging on the front door until you took him in. Which you would. You'd just give in, feel sorry for him. Everybody used to feel sorry for Sid, you couldn't help it. He was such a weak person, easily-led, totally impressionable, but very likeable, and he played on that, endlessly telling you how hard-done by he was.

"Peee-TAHHH!"

So, yeah, there was always a couch for him if he wanted to crash out. Sometimes, we'd sleep, but more often we'd stay up, talk, smoke joints, or maybe we'd walk over to Barry Jones' place to see if he was awake, maybe had some people around, someone Sid could score off.

"Peeee-taaaah!"

Yeah, Sid. I'm coming, I'm coming . . .

IT WAS 1977, AND I WAS LIVING IN Elgin Mews North, in Maida Vale. Sid lived with Nancy a couple of blocks away in Pindock Mews. There were a lot of musicians and bands living in that neighbourhood then. Barry Jones, who's in Los Angeles now, also lived nearby, and was a friend. Barry was the half-brother of the designer, Bruce Oldfield, and had helped set up the Roxy, the punk club in Neal Street in Covent Garden – Andy Czezowksi, who'd worked with Malcolm McLaren and briefly managed The Damned, had opened the club with some money he'd borrowed from Barry. Barry also had a band who would later become The Idols, that all kinds of people at one time or another played in – including Glen Matlock, who Sid had replaced in The Sex Pistols, and Jerry Nolan, who used to be in The New York Dolls and played in The Heartbreakers with Johnny Thunders.

A lot of nights, we'd start at the Roxy, see some bands, and usually, after that, we'd end up back at Barry's place. The place he lived it was like a crash-pad. There were always lots of people, half the time you didn't know who they were or what they did or what they were doing there.

It was at Barry's that I first met Sid. Everybody knew him, of course. He'd just joined The Sex Pistols, and you couldn't at the time get any more notorious than that. When I met him first, I think Sid was still living in a flat in Chelsea Cloisters, and used to come with us back to Barry's, usually looking for drugs.

In those days, if punk had a drug of preference it was speed, although everyone was also drinking a lot, and there was usually a lot of grass and hash around. I don't think Sid was on heroin at the time, the smack came later. Even then, though, Sid was into needles. He used to shoot speed and Seconal, and later just about anything that was going.

Back then, he could be fun to be around. When he wasn't completely stoned, he could be bright and funny. Meeting him for the first time, I remember people used to be a bit intimidated. Everyone knew the stories about him beating people up at Pistols' gigs, before he joined the band. But he never really struck me as being a genuinely violent person. At first, when he'd pick fights at gigs or down the Roxy, it was as if this was the only way he could impress people, be accepted, make a name for himself. And the name itself – Vicious – was a joke, because he wasn't.

It was only when he started living out the myth of being Sid Vicious as if it was a reality that he changed. That's when he started getting out of control, when everything in his life revolved around two things: heroin and Nancy.

NANCY SPUNGEN WAS A PIG. SHE HAD COME TO London with Johnny Thunders and The Heartbreakers, who had signed to Track Records, The Who's label, and had come over from New York to tour with The Clash and The Damned. Her reputation as a kind of super-groupie had already been secured in New York, where she had hung out at punk venues like CBGBs and Max's Kansas City and worked as a stripper from the age of 17, after running away from home in Philadelphia. By the time she was 18, Nancy was also a full-on heroin addict.

Nancy's declared intention, upon arriving in London, was to pick up with a Sex Pistol. Her first target, inevitably, was Johnny Rotten, who immediately detested her, dismissing her caustically as "a Titanic looking for an iceberg". Rejected by Rotten, she turned her attentions to Sid, who, to everyone's horror, became utterly besotted with her. I don't know if Sid felt sorry for her because she was treated so badly by everyone else, or whether he saw something in her, something worth loving, that no one else could see.

Whatever, pretty soon after they met, Sid and Nancy were hardly ever apart. They shared everything, including the heroin habit that would eventually destroy them both.

No one really liked Nancy. McLaren and the other Pistols were grimly opposed to her relationship with Sid, could only see it ending in tears or worse. Everyone else who met her hated her. You couldn't blame them. She was simply not the type of person you'd really want to know.

She was crude, loud and nasty. A really coarse, loud, up-front American. You'd dread her turning up with Sid. Sometimes, she could be sweet and nice, but more often she was a complete bitch. She was the type of person who, the first time you met her, would want money off you, or drugs. You'd know her five minutes and she'd be trying to borrow money, which you knew you'd never get back. If there were drugs around, she'd want them all. Nothing was safe when she was around, she'd steal anything that wasn't nailed down. She was pathetic.

I think Sid really loved her, but I don't know why. And when they did come around, or you met them somewhere else, they'd always be arguing. It was just the way they were together, really. The more they got into heroin, the more they'd have rows – usually about where they were going to score some more drugs and where the money would come from to pay for them.

I guess they used to squabble because that's the only way they knew how to behave. They were junkies. That's how junkies often behave. But I never saw Sid behave violently towards her, although there were all kinds of stories about him beating her up, or her beating him. I guess, yeah, that in some ways it was a sordid relationship because it was all based around heroin. If they weren't shooting the stuff, they were trying to score or get money to score. Sid was always complaining about not being paid,

SID VICIOUS PIC: PETER KODICK/GRAVELLE

PETER GRAVELLE, working under the name Peter Kodick, was one of the first photographers on the London punk scene. He shot the sleeve of The Damned's first album and the covers of The Jam's *All Mod Cons* and Johnny Thunders' *So Alone*. He also worked with The Police, Generation X, Penetration, Nick Lowe, The Only Ones, Chelsea, Joe Jackson and Snatch, the group formed by his then-wife, Patti Palladin. In the early-Eighties, he moved to Milan, where he was a leading fashion photographer. He is currently preparing an exhibition of his work in London.

or not being paid enough, although he was a member of The Sex Pistols, who he thought were the greatest band in the world.

Which, for a time, they were.

LONDON, APRIL, 1977-JANUARY, 1978

The first time I saw The Sex Pistols was at the Screen On The Green in Islington on April 4, 1977. It was Sid's first gig with the band, and they were brilliant. Because they'd been banned by then from so many venues, and they'd always refused to play places that would have them, like the Roxy, this was the first time a lot of people had been able to see them since "Anarchy In The UK" had made them the most infamous band in the country.

Rotten, especially, was incredible, probably one of the best performers I've ever seen. People would follow his every move on stage. You couldn't take your eyes off him. And it didn't seem like a show, something they were putting it on. They really did mean it, Rotten especially. It was like he had something he really wanted to tell you, and you were compelled to listen. At that time, he could command your complete and utter attention in a way that only a few other people have ever done.

Everybody came out of that gig stunned, and if they were convinced of anything it was this: at that moment, The Sex Pistols had the power. Which is why what happened to them over the next 10 months was such a tragedy and waste.

Things started getting really bad for them after "God Save The Queen" and the Jubilee Day boat trip on the Thames in June. The newspapers had been running increasingly hysterical stories about them for most of the year, but the tabloids' anti-Pistols campaign reached a peak after that, and the violence that had always surrounded the band became suddenly and awfully real.

Jamie Reid, who designed all the Pistols artwork, had his nose and leg broken in an attack in Borough. This was the day after a particularly inflammatory editorial in the *Sunday Mirror*. The following weekend, Johnny Rotten, Pistols' producer Chris Thomas and engineer Bill Price were attacked in the car park of The Pegasus, a pub in Highbury, near Wessex Studios. Ten thugs armed with knives and razors set upon them. The tendons in Rotten's left hand were severed. Rotten was also attacked with a machete. On the afternoon of June 21, the Pistols' drummer, Paul Cook, was attacked by a gang of Teddy Boys as he was coming out of Shepherd's Bush tube station. He was beaten with iron bars and a wound in the back of his head needed 15 stitches.

Everyone was paranoid – justifiably so. It had got to the point where they couldn't go out without someone wanting to beat the fuck out of them. Rotten was terrified. Sid just shut himself away with Nancy and shot more and more heroin. It seems to me that at this point McLaren lost control of the situation, just as he would lose control of the band – and Sid, especially – on their American tour. His response to the escalating violence was to get the band out of the country. He arranged a 13-date tour of Scandinavia.

I joined them half-way through the tour. I thought the whole thing was a fiasco. They were playing pubs, basically. You'd walk into these places and there'd be like 50 people with hair down to their waists and shit. It was pretty wild. But they shouldn't have been playing these places, it was just insane. Nancy had been left behind in London, so Sid was pretty clean and together for the tour and he was trying really hard at the gigs.

He didn't do very much, just stood there most of the time. Because he could barely play, he had to really

Dennis Morris

Sid Vicious: a disaster waiting to happen

Sid chairs a typical fan-club meeting, backstage during the Pistols' US tour

concentrate to keep up with the rest of the band.

What really struck me, though, and what I still remember most clearly about that tour, was the change in Rotten since the Pistols played the Screen On The Green, just a few months before, the extent to which he had so quickly become a parody of himself. At the Screen, he'd been commanding and brilliant. Now he was just putting on a show. OK, they were playing to small crowds and that must have been disheartening. But it didn't really excuse what he'd become in just a matter of months – this grotesque parody, just pulling faces and looking stupid.

It was like he'd somehow already lost interest. Something had happened, I think, between him and McLaren. This is the thing about Malcolm: he may have been brilliant at managing the media, but as far as actually running a band, keeping them together, organising tours, he didn't know what the hell he was on about. And as far as being in touch with the people in the band and looking after them, from what I saw, he didn't care. He didn't care about them at all. Not one bit. He only cared about himself.

He took a lot of credit for a lot of things he shouldn't have taken credit for and had no right to take credit for. This idea of him being the big Svengali who controlled everything, it was bullshit. OK, he put together a band, and in the beginning he helped finance it. But he was extremely lucky he got someone like Rotten involved. Rotten had a quickness and intelligence that McLaren underestimated, I think. Without Rotten, The Sex Pistols would have been just another band. They wouldn't have been any better than Slaughter And The Dogs. And I don't think McLaren could deal with that. He couldn't bring himself to give Rotten the credit he deserved.

McLaren was just somebody who ran a clothes shop. What did he know about managing a group? I mean, look at the way he planned to conquer America. By sending the Pistols out to play places he knew there'd be trouble, basically, in the mid-West, the South and Texas. He didn't want them to play New York or Los Angeles, where they'd be appreciated, where there were people who genuinely wanted to see them and hear them play. That would have been too easy. So the whole American tour was another fiasco. It was out of control from the start, and it certainly deepened the rift between him and Rotten.

Sid was also out of control. I think that's when he first really started to believe in his own myth and started trying to live up to it. He would never have got away with that in England, people here didn't believe in all that shit. No one would have stood for it. But here he is in America, suddenly he's out there and he's on his own and it's a new country and all anyone knows about him is what they've read in the newspapers and he's got this big reputation that people are taking seriously and he's doing everything he can to live up to it. It's like you can go from being the school wimp in one country to being the school heavy in another country, if you play it right.

Starfile/Bob Gruen

Back in England, all you'd hear from people was how stupid it all was over there. How disorganised and chaotic everything was. They had bodyguards who were meant to keep Sid away from drugs, but he kept running away. Who could blame him? These people used to beat him up, claiming it was for his own good. What the fuck was all that about?

If the tour had been properly organised, the group would have survived it. They would have carried on. But it was such chaos, it would have made anybody want to stop. Why would anybody want to be involved with someone who's managing a group so incompetently, who's completely messed everything up like McLaren had. No wonder Rotten left.

PINDOCK MEWS, LONDON, FEBRUARY-AUGUST, 1978

Sid and Nancy had moved to Maida Vale just after The Sex Pistols' Scandinavian tour, in August, 1977. By then, Sid wasn't seeing much of Rotten, who was still living in Chelsea and who hated Nancy. Rotten was also appalled at Sid's heroin habit, which was getting completely out of hand, and which he would never again get under control.

It had struck me then, during the nights Sid would spend at my place in Elgin Mews, how alone Sid could seem. I don't think he ever had any close friends, apart from Rotten, who he was always in awe of and would never say anything against, even towards the end, when Rotten had walked out on the Pistols and there were supposed to be such bad feelings between them.

He had a lot of people who surrounded him and used him, but basically no one apart from Nancy that he was in any way close to. Even when he moved to New York, when it came down to it, he'd see Barry, he'd see Nancy, of course, he'd see a few dealers who he was maybe getting stuff off, he'd see me. And that would be it. Not that many other people at all.

When he first used to turn up at my place, it was like he was just looking for someone to talk to, away from all the bullshit. We'd sit up, and over a period of time I found out about his background, his childhood. He'd talk about his mother, who was a pathetic individual in many respects. And Sid, in many ways, was no better. But there was nothing desperate about him then.

When he got back from the American tour, he'd definitely changed. He'd turn up, sometimes on his own, but most often with Nancy, and all he'd talk about was drugs and McLaren, who he thought was just using him. Rotten had been too strong for McLaren, refused to be manipulated, and quit the band rather than be used. Sid was a lot easier for McLaren to control. He was like Malcolm's puppet, and he knew it.

McLaren was still trying to make the Sex Pistols movie he'd already spent so much of the band's money on, and took Sid out to Paris to film the "My Way" sequence for what would become *The Great Rock'N'Roll Swindle*. But it was a joke. McLaren couldn't accept that when Rotten left, the Pistols were over as a band. He took Steve Jones and Paul Cook to Brazil to record with Ronnie Biggs, which was disgusting, a complete sell-out of punk, for which he should have been hung, drawn and quartered. At a stroke, The Sex Pistols became nothing more than a novelty act.

And Sid became a novelty act, as well. In many respects, what McLaren was trying to do with him was turn Sid into a kind of punk Gary Glitter or Alvin Stardust. Sid was partly to blame. He'd complain endlessly about McLaren, but he'd still take his money. He wasn't going to walk out on McLaren, like Rotten had. He wasn't going to bite the hand that was feeding him. As long as there was some money to be made, he'd carry on. It was an ugly situation and he was frustrated. Although he was almost permanently stoned, he knew he was turning into a joke.

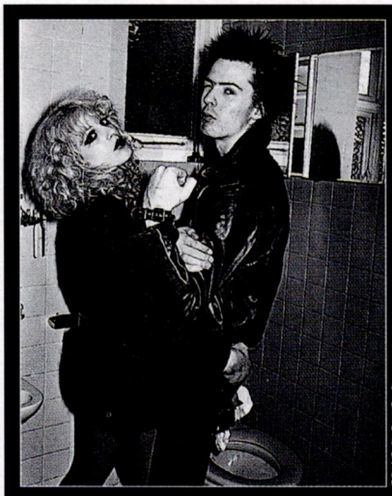
At the same time, Nancy was always telling him he was going to be a star in his own right, and by August they'd convinced themselves that Sid's solo stardom could best be achieved by moving to New York. They were tired of all the hassles and harassment in London – they'd been in court in May and August, answering charges of possession of methylamphetamine – and had been badly freaked out by the death at Pindock Mews of studio assistant John Shepcock, from a cocaine overdose. They had stirred from dope-induced unconsciousness to find Shepcock in bed with them. It was several hours later before they realised he was dead.

There had also been a ferocious falling-out with Rotten. Sid and Nancy had turned up at Rotten's place in Gunter Grove, Chelsea. Rotten refused to let them in. Sid tried to kick in the front door, Nancy behind him screaming. One of Rotten's friends, most likely Jah Wobble, rushed outside and attacked them with an axe. It was time to split.

To raise money for their trip, they put on a farewell gig at the end of August at the Electric Ballroom in Camden, fronting a band called The Vicious White Kids, which included Steve New on guitar, Glen Matlock on bass and Rat Scabies on drums.

This is what they billed the show as: SID SODS OFF.

Which is what he then did.



Chalmer Davies

'I wanna fuck a Sex Pistol'

NANCY SPUNGEN was the daughter of an affluent Philadelphia family. By the age of 11, she had already undergone psychotherapy for her uncontrollable rages, and had twice attempted suicide before she was in her mid-teens. She was 17 when she arrived in New York, where she quickly earned an unflattering reputation as a grasping groupie. She was a heroin addict at 18. She came to England with Johnny Thunders, declaring that her ambition was to "fuck a Sex Pistol". Johnny Rotten was her original target, but she ended up with Sid.

In an interview with the music paper, *Sounds*, she touchingly recounted the early days of her relationship with Sid.

"We slept on the same bed for five nights before we screwed," she said. "We screwed as a joke really, he didn't appeal to me sexually. He said to me, 'How is it that the birds I fancy never like me?' So the next night when we were down at the Roxy and I said to him, 'Right, tonight we'll screw.' And we went home and we did. We did it in the bedroom, we did it in the bathroom, we did it everywhere. On the night we screwed, Sid and me, he had smelly feet and he wet the bed . . . I find him sexually attractive now. I've taught him everything he needs to know. I've put that sexual aura into Sid, he was pretty near a virgin before. He was turned on by me like he never was before. He had a schoolboy crush on me."

NEW YORK, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1978

It's November 21, 1978. I'm downstairs at Max's Kansas City, New York. There's a bunch of us. Barry Jones and Steve Dior from The Idols, a couple of Heartbreakers, including Jerry Nolan, some girls from Miami. I've been in New York for two days. A lot's happened since I was last here, and we're still trying to take it all in.

When Sid and Nancy arrived in New York, they booked into the Chelsea Hotel on West 23rd Street. They had a small room on the first floor, with a bathroom off it. It was even trashier than Pindock Mews. Whatever she was, Nancy was no home-maker. In the middle of the room was a double bed, surrounded by the spoils of Sid's rock'n'roll war: a couple of guitars, a ghetto blaster, cassettes, clothes everywhere (his and hers), leather trousers, mohair ➤

The Pistols: they meant it, *maaaaan!*

Dennis Morris

sweaters, T-shirts and leather jackets. In the open drawers next to the bed were spoons, needles, bits of cotton and empty drug packets. The last time I was there, the leftovers of takeaway food and drinks were all over the floor.

On October 12, Sid woke in that room from a drug-induced stupor and found Nancy lying under the sink in the bathroom. She was wearing only her underwear – black knickers and bra – and there was a knife sticking out of her side. There was blood everywhere, and all of it was hers. The bed was soaked in it, there was a trail of it leading to the bathroom, suggesting that at some point during the night she had dragged herself across the room, from the bed to the bathroom, where she had collapsed, dying some time in the early hours of the morning of October 12 from internal haemorrhaging caused by a single knife wound to the abdomen.

Sid started screaming for an ambulance, but it was the cops who got there first and to them it looked like an open-and-shut case, with Sid being the obvious killer. The couple were junkies with a history of domestic violence. Not only that, the knife in Nancy's side was Sid's – a folding hunting knife with a black jaguar on the handle. He'd bought it the day before in Times Square. He was arrested, handcuffed and taken to the Third Homicide division on 51st Street.

"I did it because I'm a dirty dog," he allegedly confessed before being charged with second degree murder, although he'd been so stoned the previous night he could remember nothing at all about what had happened.

On October 13, he was sent to Riker's Island, a tough, heavily-guarded remand centre in the middle of the Hudson River.

On October 17, he was released on bail of $50,000, the money paid into court by Virgin Records.

McLaren was in New York by now, as was Sid's mother, Anne Beverley, into whose care he was released. They moved into the Seville, a welfare hotel on Madison Avenue.

On October 22, McLaren, who had hired a team of private detectives to investigate the case, got a call from an hysterical Anne Beverley: Sid had just slashed his arm with a razor and a broken light bulb in an apparent suicide attempt. He was admitted to Bellvue Psychiatric Hospital, where they put him in detox.

On November 21, Sid was back in court for another bail hearing. District Attorney Al Sullivan had this to say to the court about Sid: "He cultivates an image of antagonism and has a flagrant disregard for constitutional authority." However, the judge allowed bail to stand, on the condition that Sid reported regularly to New York Homicide and attended a methadone clinic.

That night, he turns up at Max's to a hero's welcome. There's a lot of backslapping and bullshitting and I'm glad to see Sid, but it's hard to talk with so many people around.

And what am I going to say to him?

"Did you do it?"

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 9, 1978

We meet at Max's, downstairs. We have a booth, order dinner and drinks. There are maybe five of us. We're talking about what it was like on Riker's Island and Sid's playing the tough guy, shrugging it off, when some huge asshole comes up and tries to pick a fight with him. Sid's so far into his own myth, he squares up to the guy. I can't believe he's reacting to this geek. Everyone at the table stands up.

"Hey, fuck you!"

"Fuck yourself!"

'Never be lazy when it comes to your friends . . .'

Starfile/Bob Gruen

JOHN LYDON was perhaps Sid's closest friend. They had met in 1975 at Hackney College of Further Education, where Sid had enrolled on a vocational photography course. Their friendship was eventually wrecked by Sid's relationship with Nancy and his heroin addiction, which Rotten did everything to prevent until their final estrangement.

"His attitude changed completely when he met Nancy," he later recalled. "He was banging up all day and night. It was pathetic." "Don't care," he said, when asked for his reaction shortly after Sid's death. "I don't see why I should have any feelings about it at all."

Later, in his autobiography, *No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs*, however, he expressed a sense of guilt about what happened to Sid: "If only I hadn't been lazy and washed my hands of him like Pontius Pilate," he wrote. "That's something I'll carry to the grave with me. I don't know what I could have done but I should have done something. There are always ways. You must never be lazy when it comes to your friends."

"Fuck off!"

"Yeah?

"Yeah."

We sit back down, order more drinks. Sid wants some pills. I don't think so. More drinks. Sid's depressed. It's time to go. Nothing's happening here.

We get a taxi to Hurrah's, but when we get there it's sort of empty. You could have good nights at Hurrah's, but this didn't look like it was going to be one of them. There was a band playing and a few people watching them.

"Sid, let's cruise."

He's not listening. There are some nice girls here. Sid talks to one of them. The music's real loud, you've got to get real close to hear what anyone's saying, you've got to yell at the person next to you to make yourself heard.

Then some guy comes over to Sid and says something to him. It could have been, "I think you're great. I'm so glad to meet you." Or maybe it's – WATCH OUT! – "I think you're an asshole." Although I don't think that's what he says, because this isn't some big kind of guy and he doesn't look like he's provoking Sid.

Anyway, the next thing I know, out of the blue, Sid's smashed a glass straight in this guy's face.

Blood, screams.

"LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!!!!"

We grab an elevator, get out of there.

"SID, YOU'RE AN ASSHOLE!!!!"

It was just the most stupid thing to do. But Sid wasn't thinking. He was just drunk and Nancy's just died and he's fed up with everything and here he is again, playing out a role that he shouldn't have been playing. My first reaction was to get him the hell out of there as quickly as possible. So I just grabbed him and pulled him out. It was like, "What the fuck are you doing, man?"

I just wanted to get him out of there before the police arrived. But it was stupid on my part to think that even if we got him out of there he'd get away with it. Everybody knew who he was, people had seen him do it. And the guy turns out to be Patti Smith's brother, Todd. And of course, if the police don't pick him up that night, they're going to pick him up tomorrow.

Which they do. The next morning he's arrested.

I'm prepared to go to court, ready to swear that Todd had attacked Sid and Sid had acted in self-defence. I'm sorry for what's happened, but I don't want Sid to go back to prison.

But that's where he's heading.

No more bail, just Riker's Island, out there on the Hudson.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 1, 1979

Terry Ork had been busted for trying to buy some Quaaludes from someone in Astor Park who turned out to be an undercover cop. Terry was the president of Ork Records and had managed Television when they first started. He was a friend, and he asked me to go to court with him, so I say yeah, and we go down there on the morning of February 1.

There's lots of the usual sitting around and confusion.

"Courtroom number what?"

"Wait here."

More waiting.

"Terry, this is gonna take a while. I'm going to smoke a cigarette."

I go downstairs and someone I don't know comes up to me. He's working for Sid's legal team and he's recognised me from Sid's last court appearance. He tells me that Sid's is going to be released within the hour, that he should be out by lunchtime, a day early.

Starfile/Bob Gruen

'You cowboys are all faggots . . .' The Sex Pistols' American tour

You wonder where she is now and how looking back she thinks of him, the girl who was giving Sid a blow-job in his hotel room after The Sex Pistols' sixth show of their chaotic US tour at Tulsa's Cain's Ballroom, when the effects of the heroin he'd just shot up relaxed his bowels, which he proceeded to empty into her face just as tour manager Noel Monk walked in on them, gagging in disbelief.

Sadly, this sordid incident was typical of Sid's behaviour during the tour, which was the point, everyone concerned mutually agreed, when Vicious went out of control.

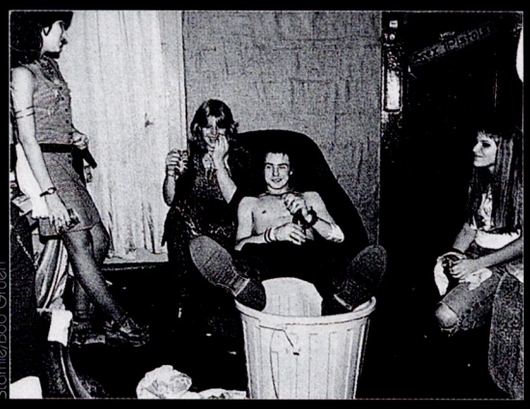
Here are some of the lowlights of that blasted trek.

★ The night before the opening date of the tour, Sid drunkenly provokes his minder, an ex-biker and war veteran named DW, into a fight by punching him repeatedly in the face. His minder reacts by grabbing Sid's hair and smashing his face against the sink in the bathroom of Sid's room. Sid smiles though the blood: "Now we can be friends."

★ The tour opens at Atlanta's Great Southern Music Hall, after which Sid gives his minders the slip to score some drugs. They find him later at the Piedmont Hospital. He'd fallen asleep with a syringe in his arm, recovered consciousness and for want of anything better to do carved the words "GIMME A FIX" into his chest with a kitchen knife. When the minders find him, he's barely conscious.

★ On the second night of the tour, in Memphis, high on drugs, Sid takes Noel Monk's knife and slices a half-inch gash in his arm.

★ The third date of the tour at Randy's Rodeo, San Antonio, Texas, a notoriously rough venue, full that night of beery rednecks. Sid walks on stage and announces: "You cowboys are all faggots." He's hit in the face with a full beer can. "It hurt, but I don't care," he shouts at the crowd, who are alarmingly hostile. Sid takes a swing with his bass at the head of one heckler, but hits an executive from the Pistols' US record company, Warner Bros. "Oh, dear," sighs Rotten sarcastically, "Sidney seems to have dropped his guitar."



Starfile/Bob Gruen

★ The fourth date of the tour in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Sid is completely stoned and barely able to play. He invites sexual favours from the audience and a girl climbs on stage and starts giving him a blow-job. He's so far gone, he barely notices, but recovers enough to seek out the girl after the show. He screws her backstage on top of a bar, simultaneously slurping Schnapps from a bottle.

★ At the Dallas Longhorn Ballroom, on the fifth date, Sid appears on stage with "Gimme A Fix" scrawled on his chest in felt tip. A member of the audience headbutts him, breaking his nose. With blood pouring down his body, he grabs a broken bottle and slashes his chest. "Look at that, a living circus," comments Rotten.

★ On the way to the Pistols' next gig, at Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa, Sid is eating at a truck-stop when a redneck walks over and says, "Sid Vicious? If you're so tough, can you do this?" He stubs out his cigarette in the palm of his hand. Without missing a beat, Sid just says, "Yeah," takes out his hunting knife and cuts himself deeply across his own palm, the blood dripping onto his plate as he carries on eating.

★ Two days after the Pistols last-ever show at Winterland in San Francisco on January 13, Sid ODs in a squat in Haight Ashbury. He's turning blue on a mattress when he's discovered and taken to a doctor in Marin Country. Rotten by now has already decided to quit the band.

★ Three days later, on a flight from San Francisco to New York, Sid collapses and goes into a drug-induced coma. He's rushed unconscious to Jamaica hospital, where he spends two lonely days contemplating what's left of his future now the Pistols appear to have finally imploded.

Night of the living dead: Sid snacks his dog up

Starfile/Bob Gruen

They were bringing him from prison right now, in fact. He asks me to stay around.

What kind of coincidence is this?

Anyway, Terry's going to have to deal with his drug bust on his own. I go around to the back of the courts to wait and bump into Sid's mother, the only other person waiting for him. I'd met her a few times. I didn't have a high opinion of her. If you saw her in a club, you'd hope she wouldn't see you. Let's put it this way, she was not a person I'd give my phone number to. It seemed amazing to me that anyone expected her to look after Sid. She couldn't even look after herself. It was all pretty hopeless.

Sid arrives not much later. There's some paperwork – "Sign here!" – and then the cuffs come off and we're all out the back door and onto the street. Sid's out of one jungle, into another. He looks tired and nervous, no leather jacket, no studded belt, just black jacket and pants.

We're walking fast.

"Did you get it?" Sid asks his mother.

"Yes, Sid."

It turns out that she's scored some heroin for Sid from Jerry Nolan.

We walk to where his mother is staying, maybe 10 blocks from the courthouse. No one else was there. Sid took the packet of heroin his mother had bought and Sid and I split the stuff she had – Sid shot it up pretty quickly, like he wanted to forget the horrors of the last few weeks, but no luck. The stuff Sid's mother had was total bullshit. Jerry Nolan had sold her crap. He'd ripped her off. What a surprise!

It was typical of those people Sid hung around. What a bunch of lepers. They were like jackals, everyone on that scene. They were junkies. They had no conscience. The way these people were, they didn't give a fuck about each other. I'm sure it must have seemed real funny to Jerry, ripping Sid's mother off. But it wasn't funny, it was mean and pathetic.

Sid's really pissed off and he asks me if I can get him some stuff.

"Pee-tah, can you do something?"

"I'll try. Where are you staying?"

Sid gives me the address of a girl called Michelle Robinson, who he'd picked up with after Nancy's death. He and his mother have to go and pick up some clothes that McLaren's sent out. I have some things to do, but promise to call him. I get some stuff from someone I know downtown. Then I call them up at Michelle Robinson's appartment in Greenwich Village and a bit later go over there.

The way I looked at it was like this. He was asking me to get him some stuff. I didn't particularly want to get it for him, but he was going to get something from somebody somewhere, and a lot of people would rip him off, sell him all sorts of shit, and he couldn't exactly go out and score himself. So I thought I was doing him a favour in a sense.

I don't think there were any other circumstances in which I would have done it for them. If they'd called me up and asked me to get them something, I would have refused. I just wanted to make sure he was OK. I thought if I got him some stuff at least it wouldn't be Jerry Nolan's shit.

It's already dark when I arrive at Michelle Robinson's appartment. She and Sid are lying in bed. His mother's in the front room, watching television.

Sid shoots up the heroin and gets pretty stoned and it's hard to keep him from nodding off. I think – oh, shit! – I've given him too much.

"Sid, wake up, talk to me!"

It's an hour before he slowly comes around.

During that hour, he's thrown up a couple of times, but now we're sitting on the bed and drinking tea and talking.

Sid wants some more smack, but I tell him there's none left. I hang around for another three or four hours, and then I have to go. The Only Ones, who I had done some work for, are playing their US debut at Hurrah's and I've promised to go see them. Before I go, I give what's left of the stuff to Sid's mother and tell her not to give him any more that night. She can give him the rest in the morning if he wants it.

Sid is fine when I leave.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 2, 1979

I had been sharing an appartment in the East Village with a Rastafarian. He didn't like me, and the feeling was mutual. I'd had a long night, and when he got home late that afternoon, I was still sleeping.

"Your friend's dead, man."

"What do you mean? Who's dead? Is this a joke?"

"No, man," he says. "The guy in that punk band. It's all over the news."

I felt like I'd been hit in the stomach.

It can't be! He's got it wrong.

Who's he talking about anyway? I was out of the house in a flash.

The papers are full of it.

Pictures. Headlines.

"SID VICIOUS DEAD."

He'd died that morning of a drug overdose.

I feel sick and guilty.

Sick because someone I was just with has died, and I had cared for that person. Guilty because I was the one who had brought him the heroin the night before, and sick again because the night before he had been in the most positive mood I'd seen him in for a long, long time. He'd been like the old Sid, and now he was dead. What happened?

LONDON, JANUARY, 1998

So, did Sid kill Nancy?

Nearly 20 years on, and still no one can say for sure. The version of what happened that most people believe is that Sid and Nancy had an argument, that Sid stabbed Nancy in a blur of drugs, that he was so out of it that he didn't know what he was doing and couldn't remember anything about it afterwards.

That he was guilty.

Another theory is that it was a suicide pact that went wrong. That Nancy died and Sid didn't. I don't think so. They were self-destructive, for sure, but only to the extent that they lived pretty close to the edge. People are self-destructive to the extent that we smoke and drink. It doesn't mean we want to kill ourselves. I don't think Sid wanted to die. A suicide pact? It doesn't figure. It wasn't like either of them was an extremely holy or religious person or that they were into new age mysticism and they believed they were going to meet up on the other side somewhere.

And what do people mean when they say Nancy was on a death trip? That she was suddenly talking about death all the time? Not that I heard.

I think it was more simple than that. They were just two people trying to make the most of life as they had it. It wasn't as if their lives were full of heavy meaning. It wasn't like they read heavy prose or related themselves to anything outside their own immediate universe.

They were victims of circumstance more than anything. Victims, probably, of their own junkie lifestyle.

Lynn Goldsmith/Corbis

Sid and Rotten: 'Look at that, a living circus'

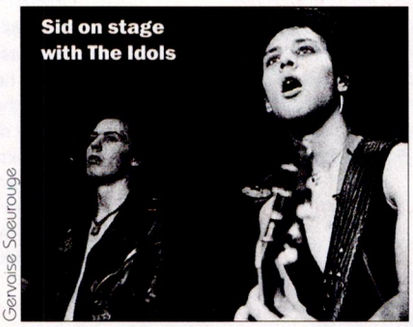
If you hang around the people they hung around with, you've got every chance of becoming a victim.

Look what happened to Johnny Thunders. Someone killed him, and I think someone killed Nancy. But it wasn't Sid.

She was an annoying bitch, but you can have a row with your wife and be angry and annoyed – it doesn't mean you're going to kill her. You walk away. And he's not even married to Nancy. What's to stop him walking out on her? I also don't think he was capable of killing her. Deep down, Sid was a baby. I think he also really did love her and if he'd wanted to get rid of her, he would have just walked out on her. He didn't have to kill her, they could have just broken up.

No, I think she was murdered – but not by Sid.

The night she died, The Idols had played Max's. After the gig, Barry Jones, Sid, Nancy and a guy Barry didn't know who said he was from the Bronx, went back to the Chelsea Hotel.



Sid on stage with The Idols

Gervaise Soeurouge

Sid and Nancy had just cashed a cheque for $1,500 they'd got from Virgin, but it was one of those nights where you've got a wad of cash, but there are no drugs to be found anywhere. No heroin, no morphine, none of the derivatives, nothing!

So everyone's beginning to hurt a little.

More phone calls, and still nothing. Even a quick trip to Alphabet City doesn't produce anything.

The mood is becoming slowly more bitchy, frustrating and desperate.

At least there's some Seconal or something, courtesy of the guy Barry doesn't know, who says he's from the Bronx and not much else. This is a guy Barry doesn't trust, but at least he's got the Sec or whatever, which is better than nothing, and this guy seems to be trying his best to find something else, or so it seems.

Sid, meanwhile, is polishing off a bottle of Jack Daniel's on his own.

The effects of Sec mixed with alcohol can be dramatic. Sec, a large red capsule, is basically a strong sleeping pill, stronger than, say, a Valium 10.

A couple of them combined with alcohol would make you mighty sloppy for a while. Fighting off the initial sleepiness allows you to speed off them for a bit. Take one or two more and who knows where you might wake up or how you got there. In fact, you probably wouldn't remember too much about what happened the previous night.

By the time Barry left the hotel, resigned to the fact that nothing was going to happen that night, Nancy was passed out on the bed. Sid was vaguely conscious, and the guy from the Bronx who Barry didn't know was still hanging on, still trying to track down some stuff, or so he said.

What happened next?

The Chelsea's changed a lot since then, but in those days it was a pretty crap hotel. It was full of transient types – musicians, models, groupies, junkies and dealers. The rooms were pretty basic. You'd be lucky if there was a TV. Usually there was just a bed. or somebody would rent a room and stick in as many beds as they wanted. The people who ran the place didn't really know what was going on. I don't think they even cared. It wasn't like you had room service and your sheets are being changed everyday. No one knew who was registered there at

Continued on page 119

'Are you a boy or a man?'

Hope Sinson

JOHNNY THUNDERS *(right, with Jerry Nolan)* the former New York Dolls guitarist and leader of The Heartbreakers, is widely blamed for introducing heroin to the London punk scene. Even before Nancy introduced Sid to smack, he had tried to turn him on to the drug, famously waving a syringe in his face and saying, "Are you a boy or a man?" "He was tragic," says Peter Gravelle. "He was reasonably talented, but couldn't control anything in his life. You couldn't trust him an inch. Thunders was even worse than Nancy. He probably thought there was something glamorous about junk, and he certainly ended up surrounded by people who thought it was. People would tell him that if he just got it together, he'd be a big star. But he never cared about that. He had no illusions, no great ambitions. He had a very low, street mentality. He thought everyone he dealt with was full of bullshit and took what he could from them." Thunders died in 1991, from a lethal mixture of methadone and alcohol in a New Orleans hotel room.

WE HAVE WAYS OF MAKING YOU TALK

by Paul Lester

CLARE GROGAN

Clare Grogan "arrived" in 1980, with *Gregory's Girl* and Altered Images – the group had a series of hit singles ("Happy Birthday", "Don't Talk To Me About Love") and albums (notably, 1983's *Bite*). Grogan left to pursue a career in film (*Comfort And Joy*) and TV (*Red Dwarf*, *Father Ted*). Today, she appears on *Shooting Stars* and *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*, has her own show on VH-1, and plays a detective in *EastEnders*

How was your first *EastEnders* love scene with Ian Beale?
"I describe it as a pillow fight, because you don't really know what we got up to in that room. I looked a bit dishevelled, he looked perfectly groomed. No, there are no X-rated versions lurking."

You've been termed "a prophetess of post-feminism". A "fluffragette"!
"I'm an absolute feminist, always was. It was lipstick feminism. I never had a problem with wanting to look a certain way and yet have certain views."

You, Nick Heyward, David Sylvian, Phil Oakey – was 1981/2 the last great era for British pop stars?
"Absolutely not – there's loads of great music now. They're not quite as flamboyant now, true. All the boys wore eyeliner and baggy pants back then.The grunge thing nipped that in the bud. But Jarvis [Cocker] is sexy, and Damon [Albarn] is pretty cute. I want to kiss the TV screen when my favourite pop stars come on. I get a wee electric shock. There's talk and there's debate about music again. That's great. I went to a rave – once – there were 12,000 people, all E'd off their faces, and I just couldn't identify with it. Everyone was loving each other. I prefer spitting on people. Rebellion. Anarchy in the UK."

Martin Fry recently told *Uncut* that pop had become consensual; a bit jamming-together-on-*Later With Jools Holland*.
"There was quite a lot of band rivalry in the early Eighties, although we'd get on well when we met up at *Top Of The Pops*. I do look back at us and see the excitement on our faces – we weren't cool about any of it. We were like, *'WEEE'RE ON TOP OF THE POPS!'*"

London Features

***Gregory's Girl* and Altered Images – a great start to anyone's career.**
"It was an extraordinary start, and almost impossible to maintain on that level without giving up everything that makes you who you are. I know that sounds really wanky, but you do start to forget who you are. Eventually, it did catch up with me a wee bit."

You could have been a monster?
"I think monster would be too strong. I was terribly spoilt. People indulge your every whim and it's not healthy."

Did you want it to end?
"People really believed I left the band to have a fantastic solo career, which was not the case. I left the band to have a boyfriend and some normality. It's kind of ironic that I ended up marrying someone from my band!"

It's a shame your solo phase ("Love Bomb" came out on London in 1987, although an album was shelved) didn't happen. You could have been a wickedly intelligent Louise.
"I resisted any attempts to manufacture me, and I got pulled all over the place; I didn't know what the fuck I was supposed to do. But I always say, 'Never say never.' If I go and see a band I want to be on stage, not in the audience. I still write pop songs."

Could you write one as good as "Wannabe" or "Say You'll Be There"?
"It's the hardest thing, to write a great pop song. Hanson do it. And the Spice Girls. But my last excursion was with [indie band] Rosa Mota, and we worked with Steve Albini – I like a lot of noise."

You're more Courtney Love than Mel C?
"Well, I think I'm more Minnie Mouse, to be honest."

You were a kind of parody of an 'ickle gurl' . . .
"I never behaved badly. I'm attracted to it, though. You can be really starry and also be civil. Noel [Gallagher] is a fantastic example – he's a total man of the people but he always arrives in a limo. And he probably throws telly sets out of hotel windows. I'm capable of behaving mildly badly. I left the *Tank Girl* party on a stretcher! I had two black eyes. I was dancing with Pam Hogg and fell. Drugs? My hand on my heart, I always kept away. I must have been ridiculously naive, but I never saw any evidence. I was like a nun! I'd be in bed by 11 o'clock."

But you must have had boys throwing themselves at you?
"I swear to God – never. I'm not just saying this for effect, I never had a boyfriend – they didn't ask me out or phone me. The only boy from a band who took me out was Gary Kemp [of Spandau Ballet], and he was fantastic. He always bought me great presents! But we drifted apart due to musical differences (*laughs*)."

Have you seen Edwyn Collins lately?
"I see him occasionally. He used to go out with my sister – she chucked him! He was very upset. I love revealing these things now that they don't matter. Nick [Heyward] married a girl from my class, called Marion. None of us really hung out together, but we did have the occasional night. Who could forget dancing with George Michael at the Epic Records party? That was the most embarrassing moment of my life. George Michael, the most co-ordinated white man in Britain, and Clare Grogan, the pixie of pop. What a laugh."

Are you nervous with celebrities?
"I never said a sensible thing to John Peel in my life. All I can do is stumble through a sentence. It's weird. I get like that with people I admire. I couldn't be in the same room as David Bowie. I'd die."

What are you all-time favourite 45s?
"'Hong Kong Garden' by Siouxsie & The Banshees made me want to be in a band. 'Teenage Kicks' [by The Undertones]. Prince's 'Sign O' The Times' – the most poignant pop record ever. And The Sex Pistols' 'Anarchy In The UK'."

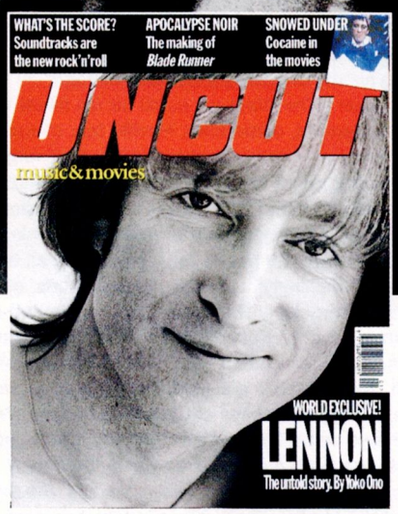
What are the nicest and nastiest things ever written about you?
"That whole *Melody Maker* thing [unforgivably, in the mid-Eighties the paper called Clare "scarface"] broke my heart. The nicest? I liked it when Paul Morley said he'd eat my socks."

Get up, sign up!

Every month UNCUT brings you complete, unrivalled coverage of the very best in music and movies.

Sign up now and we'll cut 15% off a one year subscription, saving you £5 on the normal cover price. What's more, with direct debit, payment couldn't be easier.

We also guarantee you'll get UNCUT delivered to your door every month. So make sure you don't miss a single issue of the magazine that brings you the best in music and movies, both old and new, cult and classic.



Yes! I would like to subscribe to Uncut for:
(tick appropriate box)

☐ 1 Year (12 issues) for £28.00, saving 15% on the full price of £33.00.

☐ Direct Debit paying £14.00 every 6 months, saving 15% on the full price of £16.50.

Complete and return this coupon with your payment to:
Uncut Subscriptions, Freepost CY1061, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3ZA.
(No stamp necessary if posted in the UK)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms:

Address:

Postcode:

Country:

Daytime tel. No:
(in case we have a query with your order)

CHOOSE FROM THREE EASY WAYS TO PAY

1 I enclose a cheque / postal order for £ _____ made payable to IPC Magazines Ltd.

2 Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex

Card No.

Expiry Date:

Signature:

3 Or you can pay just £14 every six months by Direct Debit, simply by completing your bank details in the space provided on the right.

The closing date for this offer is 31st May 1998. Please allow up to 6 weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue. Offer open to new UK subscribers only. For overseas enquiries please call: 01444 445555.

FOR AN EVEN FASTER RESPONSE CALL OUR CREDIT CARD HOTLINE ON
01622 778778
PLEASE QUOTE CODE IN CORNER OF COUPON
LINES OPEN MONDAY – FRIDAY 9am – 7pm.

IPC Magazines, the publisher of Uncut, may pass your name and address to other reputable companies whose products and services may be of interest to you. Please tick this box if you prefer not to receive such offers. ☐

DIRECT Debit

Code 20X

Originators Reference – 824 921

A/C No:

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Name of bank:

Address of bank:

Postcode:

Name of account holder:

Account No: Sort code:

THE DIRECT DEBIT GUARANTEE

The efficiency and security of the scheme is monitored and protected by your own bank or building society. The amounts are variable and may be debited on various dates. I understand that IPC Magazines Ltd may change the amounts/dates only after giving me ten days prior notice. I will inform the bank in writing if I wish to cancel this instruction. I understand that if any Direct Debit is paid which breaks the terms of this instruction the bank will make a refund. I instruct you to pay by Direct Debit from my account at the request of IPC Magazines Ltd subject to the safeguards assured by The Direct Debit Guarantee. Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions from some types of accounts.

Signature:

Date:

the road to Hell

With *The Blackout*, ABEL FERRARA *(above)* has made another uncompromising study of human darkness. Neil Kulkarni profiles the director's career and talks to Ferrara collaborator, SCHOOLY D, while Chris Roberts meets the film's star, MATTHEW MODINE

Kobal Collection

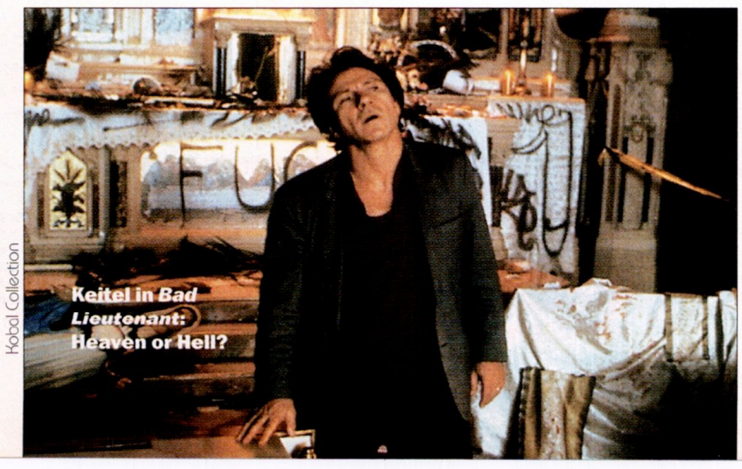
CALL HIM A BELIEVER. CURIOUSLY, FOR A film-maker whose abiding themes seem to be damnation, character imprisonment, abandonment and despair, Bronx-born, 46-year-old Abel Ferrara could be seen as America's last believer in film's artistic potential.

Only Ferrara uses genre-pics to such devastating moral and intellectual effect. The notoriety of his debut, *Driller Killer*, blinded many to its fascinating and hilarious political satire. *Ms 45* (*aka Angel Of Vengeance*) (1981) was a delirious revenge fantasy that mixed Siodmak's *Spiral Staircase* with Argento's *Suspiria* and breathed cult-classic in every frame. *Fear City* (1984) put Tom Berenger and Melanie Griffith through sleazoid Manhattan hell with a glee that John Waters would be proud of. *China Girl* (1987) was as close to an action movie as Ferrara ever got, shot through with a gorgeous star-crossed romance between Richard Panebianco and Sari Chang, while *Cat Chaser* (1989) remains Elmore Leonard's favourite film of his work. 1990's *King Of New York* was the film that bought Ferrara to mainstream attention: a stunningly mounted, ultra-cool tale of an ex-con (Christopher Walken, the perfect Ferrara player) out to regain his turf, shot through a glacially hypnotised third eye and jarred by some of the most punishing, unflinching gunplay you'd ever seen. After that, Ferrara, inevitably, went further. 1992's *Bad Lieutenant* was either a brilliant, labyrinthine character study or appalling lapsed-Catholic wank, depending on your stomach. *Dangerous Game*, also starring Harvey Keitel, gave Madonna more unwanted screen-time, while his 1994 remake of Don Siegel's *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* was TV movie tedium that even Gabrielle Anwar's pout couldn't save.

Since that dip, though, Ferrara has done his best work. *The Addiction* was a vampire movie that managed to squeeze in intense, intelligent meditations on evil and identity and make them resonate within the movie's entirely believable dramatic framework; *The Funeral* was the gangster movie as autopsy, the Mafia history written as a sickness memoir.

This year's *The Blackout* could be his finest work yet, a startling, sometimes horrific tale of excess, mental cruelty and sexual pathology that reminds us once again of Ferrara's uncomfortably fearless skills. Always with Ferrara there's a compassionate cruelty, an awareness that to represent all his protagonists fairly he has to represent them all truthfully, unflinchingly; crucially, he demands of his audience precisely the same level of sympathetic disengagement. Nobody is loveable in Ferrara's films. People are either narcotic or repellent, often both, relationships are at best doomed, at worst torn apart by the sheer raw flux of existence. What is always central is that spiritual and moral uncertainty are both inevitable and simultaneously the diametric opposite of freedom. In *The Blackout*, Matthew Modine finds his mind in constant lag behind his actions, his body and brain eternally switching control in search of a soul he hasn't got. Characters find themselves washed up by internal motives they can't explain, external demands they can't resist, entrapped by pasts and compulsions they can scarcely understand, let alone live with.

In short, Ferrara, for all his stylings, his artfulness, and his pitilessness, stands as that most uncomfortable and difficult of modern artists: a realist, stuck in that moment of wondering precisely what that means. Cold, cold heart. Great, great films. Dig in.



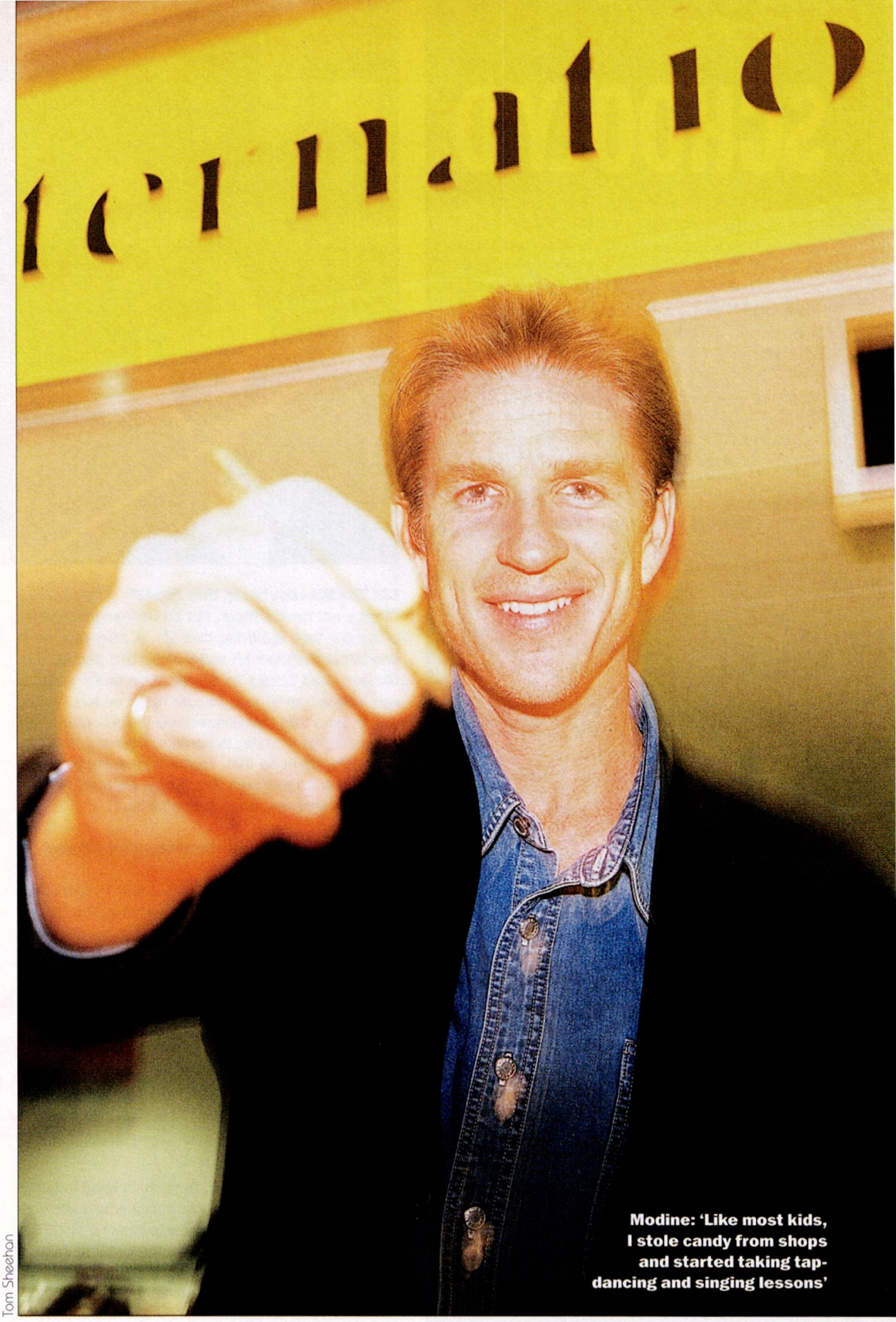
Kobal Collection

Keitel in *Bad Lieutenant*: Heaven or Hell?

MATTHEW MODINE

Born in 1959, Matthew Modine made his screen debut in 1982 opposite Rosanna Arquette in John Sayles' *Baby It's You*. His second role, as a Vietnam recruit in Robert Altman's *Streamers*, won him the best actor award at the Venice Film Festival, but it was as another Vietnam soldier, the withdrawn schizophrenic Birdy in the eponymous Alan Parker film, that he won worldwide attention.

Among his many films since are *The Hotel New Hampshire*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Married To The Mob*, *Memphis Belle*, *Pacific Heights* and *Equinox*, in which he played twins. His recent work includes *Cutthroat Island* and *Short Cuts*, and his independent films as a director are *Ecce Pirate* and *Smoking*, premiered at last year's Sundance Festival. As well as *The Blackout*, he can next be seen in Tom DiCillo's *The Real Blonde*.



Tom Sheehan

Modine: 'Like most kids, I stole candy from shops and started taking tap-dancing and singing lessons'

Would you agree that *The Blackout* is a harrowing film to watch?

"It is indeed, yeah. It's a story of somebody who's not taking responsibility for his life, drinking and taking drugs. But we're *all* guilty of that. Our whole society is, in a sense, living in a blackout. There's a hole in the atmosphere but we don't do anything about it. We know that the meat industry is filling the cows full of hormones and spraying foods with pesticides, and now there's cancers that we'd never heard of. When we were kids, *nobody* got brain tumours! There's all these bizarre things. If we were to take the billions of dollars we spent fighting Saddam Hussein for that oil, and spend it looking for alternatives to oil, we coulda told the crazy bastard to go drink his oil. Go take a bath in it!"

Did these tangents come in to the film's making?

"Boy, no; not as far as I've just gone now. We just laid a whole bunch of more importance on it than Abel ever imagined. Abel's an extraordinary man, though. He completely plays the fool. If he lived in ancient times, he woulda been the court jester. He's somebody you can get great pleasure from. Completely insane, but he has moments of brilliance that are so articulate; he's able to cut through the crap and see something for what it is. He's not hypocritical. He can tell the king that he's an asshole, yet not have his head cut off."

Who's the king for him – the producers?

"No, no, producers like him. They know what they're getting into when they get into an Abel Ferrara film. They go for the ride. He has final cut. You can't tell him how it should be done."

What made you want to work with him?

"His persistence: he wouldn't stop calling. Also, he's somebody who has the freedom to make the film the way he wants to. And the odd thing – y'know how violent the film is towards women? Well, the first person to say, you should read this, it's really good, was my wife. I said: 'What, are you out of your mind?' I picked page 10 – I'm saying to the girl I'm supposed to love and want to marry: 'Why don't you take a knife and cut that baby out of your stomach? Give it to me and I'll cut it out for you!' This is the most pornographic thing, completely obscene. But then several other women said this is good, read it. While the guys that read it were all sharing my reaction, like, wait, this is dangerous and weird . . ."

You're usually Mr Nice Guy, or at least a sympathetic character, so was this part a stretch?

"Yes, although I don't like to use the word 'stretch'. Exploration, perhaps. I'm not trying to show people how clever I am. I never imagined myself as an actor. Let me tell you: I once saw a documentary about the making of the film, *Oliver*. I was 10 years old and my father was a drive-in theatre manager. Two of my brothers had gone to Vietnam, another was 15 or 16 and his life was like *Drugstore Cowboy*. My sister went in the Navy, another left to stay with friends. I'm the youngest of seven, see, and we kept moving cos they were tearing the drive-ins down. I was the latch-key kid.

"So I saw this documentary – I didn't know they were actors. I just thought they were orphans. They were singing and dancing and pickpocketing, and I thought: oh, *that's* what I'm supposed to do. So, like most kids, I stole candy from shops and started taking tap-dancing and singing lessons. I never thought: 'Woah, I'm gonna be an actor.' I just saw this thing, identified, and thought: 'Oh, that's what I *am*!' So each of the roles has been a search for understanding who we are. That's why we write, or take pictures. I don't know where I came from, y'know? If some people wanna call it Heaven, or whatever . . . it's a mystery. And I don't know where I'm going. So I'm at least trying to figure out what I'm doing here."

SCHOOLY D

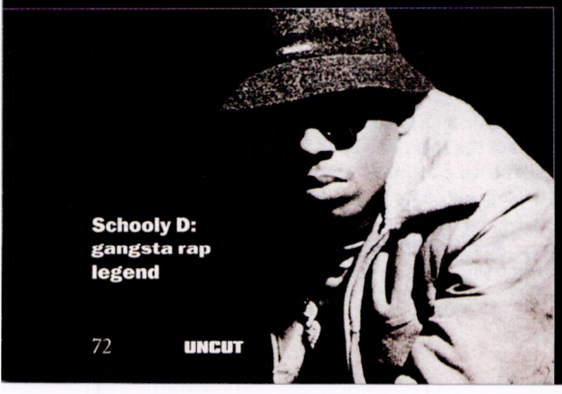
Schooly D's music has accompanied Ferrara's films before: one of the most memorable sequences of *King Of New York* is the shoot-out in the B-Boy's pad where the strobe-madness and semi-lit confusion is choreographed to the pounding brute-beats of Schooly's "Saturday Night". This rap-legend, perhaps the inspiration for every gangsta rapper since, and responsible for three of hip hop's most ferocious slabs of misanthropy – *Schooly D*, *Saturday Night: The Album* and *PSK* – has been sampled by everyone from Wu-Tang Clan to The Chemical Brothers, and co-wrote the songs and music of *The Blackout* with Joe Delia, who's worked on every Ferrara movie since *Ms 45*.

What appeals to you about working on an Abel Ferrara movie?
"Abel's like me. He came to his chosen art-form with a vision, his own particular slant of doing things – and he's never compromised that for anybody. That, if you're an artist who cares about your work, is the only way to go about it. If no one wants to put out your film or release your record, put it out yourself. Fuck everyone else, believe in your own vision and pursue your imagination relentlessly."

Did you think your music would end up on film?
"I always saw films when I was making music. I got a lot of inspiration from movies; not so much in subject matter, I pulled that off the street, but in terms of how you organise images, how you can shock people, how you can play with people's emotions and manipulate the flow of images to their minds. And when I was making music, and hopefully when people listened to it, they were making up their own little movies inside their heads. See, hip hop is a very visual art-form; you can pull the same tricks in hip hop visually as you can in film. Fast-cuts, dissolves, jump-cuts, tracking shots, you can do all that musically, and hip hop is the one medium that allows you that freedom."

What vibe were you aiming for on *The Blackout*?
"It was a mixture between Abel using my music to colour certain parts of the film with the vibe he wanted, and Joe Delia responding to the vibe of the film with his music. I think it worked out well."

Would you like to do more soundtrack work?
"Yeah, because I do feel I'm in a position at the moment to do stuff that interests me as an artist. I'm a businessman, I own all my music, and my own music publishing company. I've matured as an artist and soundtrack work would definitely suit me now. Like Abel, I started with a bang, wanted to get people's attention; I started with a lot of anger as well, because everyone around me was telling me that I would get nothing from life. That hardens you. I see both me and Abel as people who've had to battle to do what we want to do. I think we'll both keep battlin' forever."
Neil Kulkarni



Schooly D: gangsta rap legend

***The Blackout*: 'A man may be a drunk, but that doesn't make him a bad person'**

Did *The Blackout* help this quest?
"That's not my life there, but I'd be less judgmental of people that *are* living that life. A man may be a drunk, but that doesn't make him a bad person. I've certainly had binges in my life. The times cocaine was offered up to me, I never really understood it, except as a tool that allowed you to drink more. But the result the next day is horrible. I'm not gonna say to people: don't do that. That's something you have to discover on your own. Eventually, we're all responsible for ourselves, and for growing up."

Outside your own experiences, what did you draw on?
"I read *The Doors Of Perception*. And I read about magic mushrooms, which I've never done. The character's lost, everything's blurred, and he doesn't know when he's acting and when he isn't. The story's a tragedy, as in *Hamlet*, in that he brings about his own destruction through a fatal flaw. He falls in love with somebody who doesn't love him, and runs away from somebody who does."

'Ferrara believes the universe was created out of chaos, so why not make a movie in the same way?'

How was it playing opposite Beatrice Dalle?
"She is tough. Fiery? Yeah. I bet she's been in some big fights. With some big guys. In one scene she walloped me, smacked me. That was never scripted. It didn't say 'Then Annie hits Matty' or anything. Across the face, again and again. I went home in pain. I was thinking, Jeez, why does my neck hurt? I got a splitting headache. Oh yeah, right, I got the shit beat outta me by Beatrice. It was like fighting Mike Tyson. And she's got a mouth like a horse. Another day she bites my chin, it swells up like a balloon. We had to stop 'til it stopped bleeding. Then they put plastic skin on my jaw and painted over it."

And Claudia Schiffer? How did she come to be cast by Ferrara?
"Abel saw her in a restaurant, and she was like: 'Oh, I love your movies.' And he was: 'Huh?? Really??' He couldn't believe Claudia Schiffer watched his movies. He sent her the script and she wanted to play Susan, not the lead, and Abel thought: 'Great! I've found this beautiful milkmaid, I want to put my head against her breasts and just go to sleep for the rest of my life.' This wholesome woman was to represent that to Matty; would take care of him and nurture him and wanna save him. Then in rehearsals she said she'd been in a relationship like this, with somebody who didn't love her back, which was painful.

Who's the greatest: Kubrick or Altman?
"Altman always just encourages you to bring so much to the table. He doesn't want to tell you what anything's about. In fact, he doesn't say much; but if you don't bring anything, that's it. He told me, as a young actor, I'm not interested in *my* interpretation, do it on your own. It was a great lesson for me.

"Now Stanley – ha, ha, a friend of mine working on *Eyes Wide Shut* told me Stanley's finally met his match. Cos Stanley's saying 100 takes, but Tom Cruise is saying 150 takes. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I found him, on *Full Metal Jacket*, to be rather reasonable. He loves his wife and kids and animals. He puts a tremendous amount of research in before beginning a film. Like Hitchcock.

"Abel Ferrara, on the other hand, likes chaos around him: he has this belief that the universe was created out of chaos, and life on this planet was some random thing, so why not make a movie in the same circumstances?"

Two words: *Cutthroat Island*?
"Oh yeah. OK. I'm not entirely satisfied with some of my experiences. Ill-conceived. They didn't require as much of me as a baptism or rebirth like *The Blackout*, or Tom DiCillo's next, *The Real Blonde*. And I'm about to direct again. Hey, with *Cutthroat Island* I said yes to a script Michael Douglas had said yes to, then when I got there I was asked to do the script Michael had said no to. All my good stuff, my Errol Flynn swashbuckling, was cut out."

You're a lot more frank than most movie stars?
"I'm a person. I grew up in Utah. I drove a taxi. I drove a truck delivering mattresses. I've been an electrician out in Oklahoma. And I'm just telling a story, struggling to understand myself in this world. In *The Real Blonde*, I play an actor who's looking for something that's real in a world of fake. And he's about ready to chuck the towel in. I think I can understand that. If I ever can't play on this field, I'll go play somewhere else. Or make more of my own movies. We're all guilty of something. There's nothing better than a good cry."
Chris Roberts

The Blackout is reviewed on page 99

SEX+DRUGS+ALCOHOL+SCHOOLLY D
=BLACKOUT.ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

Mother

SCHOOLLY D & JOE DELIA. BLACKOUT. THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK.
AN ABEL FERRARA FILM.FEATURES 4 EXCLUSIVE NEW TRACKS BY SCHOOLLY D
INCLUDING THE PLAYER.OUT 16TH FEBRUARY ON CD AND CASSETTE

MATTHEW MODINE CLAUDIA SCHIFFER and DENNIS HOPPER BEATRICE DALLE

A wild sex & drugs binge, Ferrara is still a bad muther

Neon

Truly searing performances, Modine is a revelation

Uncut

an ABEL FERRARA film

SEX+DRUGS+ALCOHOL= THE BLACKOUT

MDP Worldwide Present In Assosiation With The Feature Film Company and CIPA An Edward R. Pressman production

Matthew MODINE
Claudia SCHIFFER
Beatrice DALLE
Sarah LASSEZ
and Dennis HOPPER
the BLACKOUT

costume design Melinda Eisheiman
production designer Richard Hoover
music by Joe Delia
executive music producer Janice Ginsberg for CAM
film editor Anthony Redman, A.C.E.
director of photography Ken Kelsch

associate producer Jay Cannold
co-producers Pierre Kafon, Michael Chambat
co-executive producers Gianni Nunnari, Meir Teper
executive producers Mark Damon, Alessandro Camon
screenplay by Marla Hanson, Christ Zois, Abel Ferrara
produced by Edward R. Pressman, Clayton Townsend
directed by Abel Ferrara

Artwork ©1998 Feature Film Company. Distributed in the UK by Feature Film Company

DOLBY

Mother

MDP

1997 CANNES

18

CURZON PHOENIX
110 CHARING CROSS RD
0171 369 1721

CLAPHAM
0171 498 3323

OPENS IN CINEMAS NATIONWIDE FRIDAY 13TH FEBRUARY

CINEMAS

FULHAM ROAD
0181 970 6011

2 CD SET HDCD

PREPARE TO SAVE THE EARTH FROM...

ALIEN INVASION

SPACE AND BEYOND II

From the Creators of CINEMA CENTURY • THE CULT FILES and SPACE AND BEYOND

Starring 37 GREAT TRACKS in SPECTACULAR DOLBY SURROUND™

featuring 150 MINUTES OF MUSIC • DELUXE CD PACKAGING

Special Guests include MARS ATTACKS • THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL • STARSHIP TROOPERS
CONTACT • INDEPENDENCE DAY • WAR OF THE WORLDS • DUNE
BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS • INVADERS FROM MARS • STARMAN • PREDATOR
BATTLESTAR GALACTICA • SPACE ABOVE AND BEYOND • STAR TREK:FIRST CONTACT
TWILIGHT ZONE:THE MOVIE • WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE and FORBIDDEN PLANET

Produced by

SPECIALLY PRICED DOUBLE CD: FILMXCD 190 OR CASSETTE: FILMXC 190

THEY'RE OUT THERE – OUT NOW

AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD RECORD STORES or from
SILVA SCREEN RECORDS LIMITED (Dept 190), 3 Prowse Place, Camden Town, London NW1 9PH
T: 0171 428 5500 • F: 0171 482 2385 • E: info@silvascreen.co.uk • www.silvanet.demon.co.uk/index.html

Also showing:
SPACE AND BEYOND

28 Symphonic Suites & Themes from Classic Science Fiction Films including APOLLO 13 • THE RIGHT STUFF • SPECIES
CAPRICORN ONE • COCOON • CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND • Music from the STAR TREK Movies & Television Shows
DOUBLE CD: FILMXCD 185 • DOUBLE CASSETTE: FILMXC 185

UNCUT REVIEWS

The definitive guide to the month's essential new music, movies, videos, television and books

Pearl Jam: McReady, Irons, Gossard, Vedder and Ament

Last Jam standing

PEARL JAM
YIELD
Epic ★★★★★
Released February 3
Seattle's grungemeisters return with their fifth album

According to the arithmetic of loss, Pearl Jam shouldn't even still be with us, let alone making records that square up to you, shoulders hunched, ready to take on all-comers, bristling with as much great music as this.

Of the original triumvirate of Seattle grungemeisters, Nirvana are, of course, long gone, Kurt seeing to that with the business end of a shotgun. Soundgarden, who'd been around longer, but had never really appealed to quite the same broad audience, called it, thankfully, a day last year. Pearl Jam, you might have thought, would have been the next high-profile casualty, their time come and gone, grunge, so vital in its time but increasingly moribund since Cobain's suicide put an unofficial amen to all that noise, now not much more than a dated din.

Pearl Jam's demise would have suited a lot of people, whose resentment of the group's incredible success has often bordered on the pathological, and for whom Eddie Vedder has never been a lot more than a self-important buffoon, troubled beyond reason by the woes of the world, a source of noisy, raw-throated complaint.

album of the month

What makes the flak directed at Vedder so frequently ludicrous is that the people who take such smug pleasure in deriding him are often the same people who will in the next breath try to convince you that Thom Yorke, surely the most singularly miserable presence in rock music since Pink Floyd's permanently unhappy Roger Waters, is some kind of pre-millennial genius.

As it happens, I'm a great fan of ominous doubt and the music it inspires – but Radiohead's fretful obsessions don't work for me. There's something too streamlined in their misery, some look-at-me imperative in their dolorous musings that simply undoes their aspiration to be noble and grave. For Yorke, the world is a festering scab, there to be picked at in disconsolate misery, but in which every element is given a somehow equally oppressive weight. War, late-running buses, universal famine, unseasonably bad weather, global economic meltdown, bones in his fish, suicide, holes in his socks – they're all the same to glum Thom, which makes his agonising eventually risible.

Eddie's view of the world is no less ➤

Ratings:

A classic	★★★★★
Excellent	★★★★
Good	★★★
Average	★★
Poor	★

All albums are out now unless otherwise stated

Jeff, Stone and Mike: giving their all

harsh than Yorke's, but, unlike Radiohead, Pearl Jam don't simply wallow in manicured ruin and, typically, *Yield* is characterised by a spit-flecked rage, a stirring defiance. What goes on in Eddie's head, you have no idea – something medieval, you suspect, a turmoil of voices, mad, loud and apocalyptic – but whatever's happening in there often makes for music of compelling ferocity and heartfelt anger, a dramatic refusal to roll over and mope, a determination to overcome rather than submit to the world and its multiple ills.

Anyway, the album starts with "Brain Of J", the musical equivalent of an avalanche, an opener in the lapel-grabbing tradition of "Once" and "Go", which did the honours respectively on *Ten* and *Vs*. Vedder's vocal here is an amazing mix of scorched-larynx rumblings and urgent falsetto swoops. *"Who's got the brain of JFK?/What's it mean to us now?"* he raves, the guitars raging around him set on stun, Jack Irons' drums driving the whole thing along with battering intensity, a manic cross between Keith Moon and John Bonham.

The cut ends with what sounds like the universe itself being sucked into oblivion before fading into the murmuring opening chords of "Faithful", a broadside against organised religion, Eddie coming down firmly in favour of individual self-determination, making your own way, abiding to no one's rules but your own. It's a love song, too, and extremely touching, dedicated to mutual feelings of respect, loyalty, truth – the reciprocation of trust between people in a world notoriously shifty and relentlessly dishonest. The song grows and grows, becoming more tumultuously epic by the moment, until it begins to assume the majestic stature of something like "Black", from *Ten*. Vedder's voice is at its most wind-blasted here, which means everything in its vocal flight-path that's not strapped down is likely to get blown straight over. The guitars, meanwhile, are astonishing, Stone Gossard and Mike McReady not for the first time provoking flattering comparisons with the firepower of Fred "Sonic" Smith and Wayne Kramer in their MC5 pomp.

Gossard's "No Way", which follows, is reminiscent of the guitarist's extracurricular work with his spin-off band, Brad. It's brutally funky, with a disturbingly dissonant climax, guitars along the way tearing great holes in the fabric of a song that from the off has sounded like it's been dragged into a backroom and worked over by burly, ill-tempered men wielding clubs and chair legs.

Yield is on a roll now, and one of the band's most outstanding recordings to date quickly follows. With "Given To Fly", Pearl Jam have finally come up with a song that for sheer stadium-sized gusto matches, and maybe even surpasses, the venerable "Alive". "Given To Fly" is full of startling religious imagery – revelation, martyrdom and resurrection all feature heavily – and has a genuinely messianic swell and surge, guitars blazing like Kleig lights, the chorus a roar in the throats of many. It also features Vedder's best-ever Pearl Jam vocal, something to place alongside his extraordinary duets with Nusrat Ali Khan on the *Dead Man Walking* soundtrack.

The fire and fury of "Given To Fly" gives way to "Wish List", a simple and affecting aspirational litany, by turns whimsical, wry and poetic – *"I wish I was a neutron bomb, for once I could go off/I wish I was a sacrifice but somehow still lived on . . . I wish I was a messenger and all the news was good/ I wish I was the full moon, shining off a Camaro's hood"* – played and sung with enormous poise and sincerity.

The record appears to peak here. It certainly seems to falter slightly with bassist Jeff Ament's "Pilate" – his first solo writing credit for the band – whose lyrics are enigmatic to the point of complete incomprehensibility, but whose churning guitars and nagging chorus make it quite irresistible after repeated listenings. Similarly, "Do The Evolution" initially comes across as not much more than crude and angry, a distant relation of earlier sanguinary assaults like "Blood" and "Lukin", but heavier-handed than either. Again, the more you hear it, the more compelling it becomes – and the climax is a demented brew of vintage Vedder wailing, unhinged guitars and a bizarre church choir.

A weird bit of untitled nonsense credited to Jack Irons acts as a wind-catching break and a preface to the final five songs, starting with the surging "MFC", with its sleek, multi-layered guitar tracks, and the handsome epic rock ballads, "Low Light" and "In Hiding". The latter is another of the album's stand-out moments. At first, it sounds like just a useful addition to an already awesome repertoire – until, a couple of minutes in, it finds another gear, gets bigger and louder, guitars going off in all directions, Vedder's voice looming over the horizon, strong, bright and huge.

A burst of static, a gunshot: this is the introduction to "Pull Me Push Me", a psychedelic spectacular, pitched somewhere between The Doors' "Horse Latitudes" and Hendrix' "Third Stone From The Sun", with Vedder coming on like a lugubrious Lizard King, surf harmonies and guitars on interstellar overdrive. The album's last track, Stone's "All Those Yesterdays", takes the album out on an initially low-keyed note, something along the brooding lines of "Indifference", but without that song's austere melodrama.

Instead, this is a slow-burning, Beatlesesque ballad with sweet call-and-response harmonies, muted horns and a climactic guitar solo that sounds weirdly like it's just wandered in from a 1968 Love session for something like "Your Mind And We Belong Together".

It's a beautiful post-script to a record which, like R.E.M.'s much-underrated *New Adventures In Hi-Fi*, highlights a band doing what they do best, without repeating themselves.

To which extent it measures up to both established Pearl Jam classics like *Ten* and *Vs*, the records that turned millions on to them in the first place, and simultaneously continues the group's growing musical diversity uncompromised by the exacting expectations of their massive fan-base.

Yield finds Pearl Jam giving their all, without giving an inch.

Allan Jones

ERYKAH BADU

LIVE *Universal* ★ ★ ★

The new Queen of Soul live in NYC

MAKE no mistake, Erykah Badu is a star despite rather than because of the claims being made for her. She's no new Billie Holiday (that's Cassandra Wilson) or Nina Simone (that's Adriana Evans) or Aretha (Yvette Michelle, if you're wondering). In terms of cultural relevance, in black pop her mantle has already been taken by Missy Elliot.

What Erykah Badu does have going for her, maybe all she needs, is that voice, the sparse Roots-style arrangements she winds it round, the anti-narrative, jazz-improv quality with which she injects her B-girl ballads.

Of course, *Live* could have been a cash-in. There is little to be gained from hearing 1996's superb *Baduizm* and its pristine orchestrations interrupted by a typically whooping'n'hollering US crowd (the show was recorded in NYC). What is refreshing, however, is Badu's refusal to mess with the precision of her vinyl persona. There are no tedious jams here. On the fabulous "Other Side Of The Game", the Pendergrass-rich strings are as lush as prime Portishead, while "On & On" gets juiced-up into pure Vegas brassy flash.

The covers, too, are well chosen (Roy Ayers' "Searchin'", a genius meld of Heatwave's "Boogie Nights" and Rick James' "All Night Long" that swerves within licking distance of that exquisite Mary Jane Girls version), and "Next Lifetime" gets spun out to a fascinating 13 minutes that never flags.

For the fans, essential, for those yet to be spellbound, get *Baduizm* and float down stream. Lovely.

Neil Kulkarni

DEEP PURPLE

MADE IN JAPAN *EMI* ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The definitive double live metal set

GROWING up in the West Midlands, you get used to certain things. Like heavy metal, for example. You're raised on it, it surrounds you. When you're in a pub, you can pretty much guarantee that if an old fella with a bald patch goes up to the juke, his Cuban-heels and his bad leather-jacket the only concession to his youth, he's gonna put in a quid and you'll get Sabbath in one ear and Rainbow in the other for the next half-hour. And, of course, Deep Purple. 1972's *Made In Japan*, a double live album (recorded on August 16 and 17 in Osaka and Tokyo) may well sound like a raucous blast of metal to many. To these soiled ears it sounds like mid-week nights in dodgy biker bars trying to shout over the 10th spin of "The Ace Of Spades". And I love it.

"Highway Star" is the coolest motorbike song ever written, featuring Ritchie Blackmore's blistering solo. "Child In

Another country

NICK LOWE
DIG MY MOOD
Demon ★★★★★
The Godfather of pub rock returns with his best collection yet

IT'S all in the small print. Check the not-as-large lettering on some of the greatest record sleeves of the last 20 years and you'll find the name of Nick Lowe. Regarded in the industry as a producer with an unimpeachable set of lug'oles (early Pretenders, Damned and six killer Costello albums spring to mind), Nick's own musical output, save a brief flirtation with the Top 40 in the late Seventies, has been criminally ignored by the masses.

Dig My Mood, his 10th solo offering in close to 20 years, finds the man they call Basher pitching a dozen tunes that serve as a culmination of all that's been classy, cocksure and catchy about his previous work.

The opening "Faithless Lover" introduces us to a brand new sub-genre, country *noir*, a chilling mix of Nashville Nick Cave with cinematic Portishead-esque trip hop.

It's followed by "Lonesome Reverie", an example of simplistic broken-hearted pop which owes much to The Cascades' Sixties hymn, "Rhythm Of The Rain".

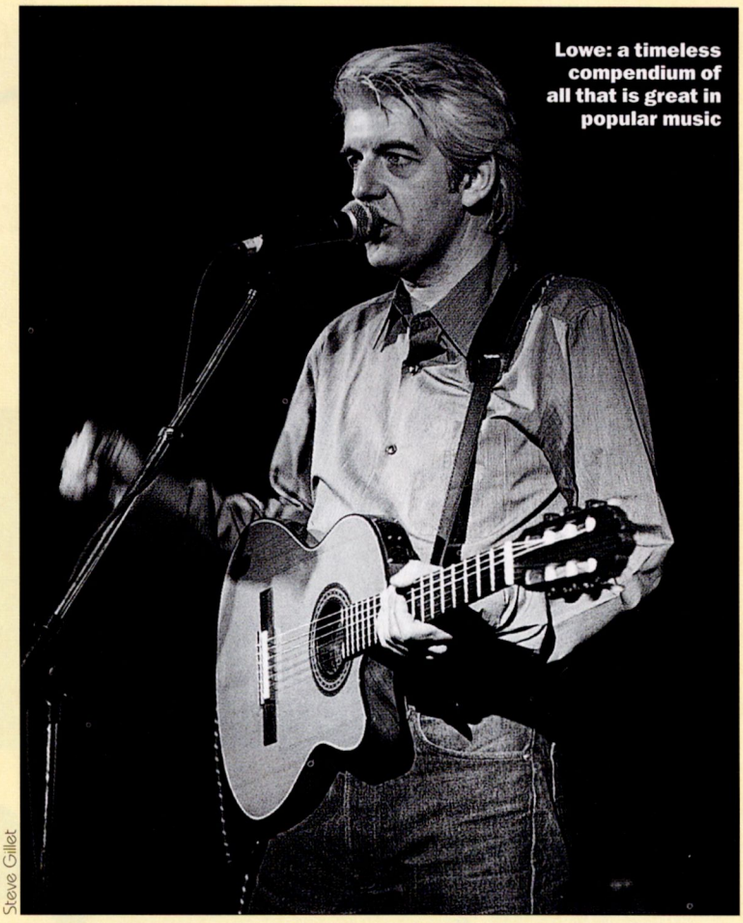
And it goes on from there, Nick as a musical pollen-hungry bee hopping from flower to flower.

"Man That I've Become" is Johnny Cash at his chick-a-boom best, "You Inspire Me" is tongue-in-cheek lounge jazz, "I Must Be Getting Over You" is classic Hank Williams double-bluff heartbreak, "Lead Me Not" a ghostly marriage of Booker T and Bryan Ferry, and "Time I Took A Holiday" is loaded with smooth-souled Bacharachisms.

Ultimate highlight? Perm any one from 12, pal, there isn't a duffer in sight. The closing "Cold Grey Light Of Dawn" comes close, though, combining Buck Owens' Bakersfield country with the irresistible string-drenched ear candy of the late, great Brook Benton.

Dig My Mood won't take the chain store window displays by storm, but like Nick's last album, 1994's beautiful *The Impossible Bird*, this year's luxuriant package of everything Lowe is a timeless compendium of all that is great in popular music. Who gives a fuck about fashionability when an LP for all seasons like this is up for grabs?

Terry Staunton


Lowe: a timeless compendium of all that is great in popular music

Steve Gillet

INSIDE TRACK
Nick Lowe

How would you describe the "mood" of *Dig My Mood*?
"It's kinda relaxed, I've tried to put across a certain atmosphere on the record, and I suppose it's pretty filmic in places. It doesn't take very long to record stuff, but it takes a lot of planning before I go anywhere near a studio. There's this village hall I rent by the day, fantastic acoustics, and we just play the tunes over and over again. It's not to find the definite way the song goes, it's just so that we know it inside out to give us the confidence to follow it wherever it goes in the studio. I record everything

live, everyone's following my voice, rather than the usual way of putting down the drums first, then the other instruments, then the vocals in a soundproof booth. The voice is absolutely in charge of proceedings."

It's 30 years since your first single with Kippington Lodge. Aren't you sick of studios by now?
"I certainly am. The paradoxical thing is that you learn all this technical stuff, but you have to resist using a lot of it. You forget about the initial simplicity of the music, which usually is the thing that gives it beauty and strength."

Is it true you made a million out of a cover version of "Peace, Love & Understanding" on *The Bodyguard* soundtrack?
"Yeah, a million bucks, which has been very useful for making records. I'm largely self-financing when I record and I'm pretty good at putting myself in the hole, money-wise. I take a lot of care with my records. The simplicity I go for isn't particularly cheap to achieve. The bill for this record probably wasn't much less than the first Frankie Goes To Hollywood album."

Did you like the Diana Ross version of "I Live On A Battlefield"?
"It was awful, dreadful, but I shouldn't complain, every songwriter wants their stuff covered. If you dangle enough hooks in the water, you'll eventually get a bite – you shouldn't grumble about the particular fish."

Time" is a gloriously portentous slab of goth balladry midway between Free and Alice Cooper. "Smoke On The Water" is every bass-player's first riff, and still kicks ass like a good 'un. "The Mule" is storming acid-rock enlivened by some hysterical vocals. "Strange Kind Of Woman" is UK-blooze as fat and ugly as Ten Years After or The Groundhogs (wahey!). "Lazy" kicks off on some wicked atonal synth-buzz worthy of Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music*, and "Space Truckin'" goes on for 19-odd minutes of stomach-turning grunge that you'd be churlish to deny. Phew.

Three unreleased tracks come on a bonus CD: "Black Night" is the ultimate leather'n'lace standby; "Speed King" is booze and barbiturates as the Holy Grail, Blackmore going hell for leather; and the cover of "Lucille" is plain gorgeous, all rolling beats, synths and a motorik thump worthy of the Velvets at their "Sister Ray" best.

Recorded two weeks after I was born, *Made In Japan* is even better than *Kiss Alive II*. That's some recommendation.

Neil Kulkarni

BRYAN ADAMS
UNPLUGGED *A&M* ★★★★
The stadium rocker gets intimate

EARLIER this year, Bryan Adams turned up at a tiny London club and played a handful of acoustic songs with the Nashville singer, Gretchen Peters. To see such an archetypal stadium rocker miraculously transformed into a warm, intimate performer was something of an eye-opener. Adams must have thought so, too, because within months he had recorded this unplugged album, all guitars, mandolins and dobros. "I Think About You" is recreated as a country rocker, "18 Til I Die" gets an unusual string arrangement, "Cuts Like A Knife" is reinvented with tin whistles and "The Only Thing That Looks

Good On Me" re-emerges as a rollicking mandolin stomp.

There are three new songs, the rocking "Back To You", a haunting Irish lament complete with Uillean pipes called "When You Love Someone", and "A Little Love", which sounds like mid-period Dylan. Throughout the acoustic set, the dynamic remains firmly rooted in the rock tradition to create one of the more adventurous unplugged sessions in this ongoing series. Adams confidently claims it is the best thing he has ever done. And he's right, too.

Nigel Williamson

MASE
HARLEM WORLD
Arista ★★★★
Meet the new leader of the rap pack

THE 20-year-old Mase crashed straight into the *Billboard* American album chart at Number One last month, and by the time

Nick Heyward: specs-a-peel

Core, fruits you, Sir!

NICK HEYWARD
THE APPLE BED
Creation ★★★

Heyward's sixth post-Haircut 100 LP, and his debut for Alan McGee

IN the history of pop, not many teen idols have forged commercially viable careers after the screaming has stopped. In fact, only George Michael comes to mind. Since the incredible, though short-lived burst of success he enjoyed with Haircut 100 between autumn 1981 and summer 1982, Nick Heyward's audience has contracted almost to the point of invisibility.

He deserves better. Even if he never recorded another single note, on the basis of H100's funkrageously cute debut album, *Pelican West* – the brass constructions of Earth, Wind & Fire meets the melancholic jangle of The Byrds – he'd merit induction into the pantheon of Saint Nicks alongside Messrs Cave and Drake (especially the latter – same breathily folk-inflected vocals). His first solo foray, *North Of A Miracle* (1983), recorded in the aftermath of a breakdown partly caused by the Haircuts' painful split, was equal parts exuberance and introspection. On the next two LPs, *Postcards From Home* (1986) and *I Love You Avenue* (1988), Heyward proved himself as adept a tunesmith as Aztec Camera's Roddy Frame or Edwyn Collins, although, mysteriously, he enjoyed far less acclaim than either. His more recent efforts – *From Monday To Sunday* and *Tangled* – rectified that, and he even found himself newly respected on America's college radio circuit. Back home, though – zilch.

Having been pushed from pillar to post in the Eighties, Nick finally has a sympathetic boss in Alan McGee, who acknowledges the anguish beneath the grin. Creation Records is the best place for Heyward. Most of these songs would slot quite nicely onto *Be Here Now* (or alongside the American "orch-pop" of, say, Eric Matthews). Don't forget *North Of A Miracle* was produced by Beatles engineer, Geoff Emerick.

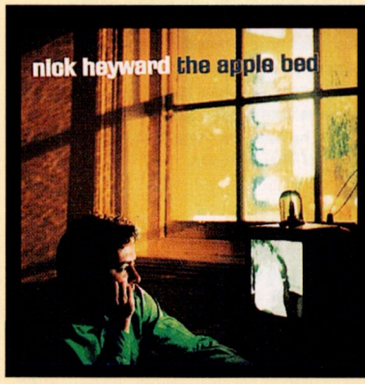
On *The Apple Bed*, Heyward demonstrates his mastery of the soft-rockin'-troubadour genre. Diehard Nickheads who have watched him dabble in everything from baroque pop to soundtrack doodles will agree he could do this stuff in his sleep. There's no denying the swirling magnificence of the choruses to "My Heavy Head" (complete with "Penny Lane" cornet solo) and "Just Like Sorrow".

But if a track as infectious as "The Chelsea Sky" doesn't chart, he might be forced to do something more extreme. Why not? It worked for that other boy star turned cult hero, Alex Chilton.

Heyward promises that his next record will be his most experimental to date.

Time for some electronic ballistics, Nick.

Paul Lester



INSIDE TRACK
Nick Heyward

Your records are usually about dying relationships. This one?
"It's about being chucked! I was going to call it *The Chucked Album*, or *Chucked*. Alan McGee said, 'No.'"

Have you been chucked recently?
"I live on my own at the moment. But I'm shocked at myself – if I'd been living alone when I was younger, I would have been rife. These days, I have to push myself to go out for a pint of semi-skimmed milk. I almost get agoraphobia."

Do you miss being in a band?
"I think of these as band songs. I almost put this record out under a new band name – Napkin Man – as radio has a problem with bands or singers if they're not new."

A lot of these songs wouldn't have shamed *Be Here Now*.
"It's the most sensible album I've ever done. It's a singer-songwriter album. The next one will be completely different. Maybe I need counselling, but I don't want the next one to have any of me on it – no cheek, no optimism."

you read this his first single, "Feel So Good", from the film, *Money Talks*, will probably be all over a radio station near you.

The new, youthful swaggering leader of the rap pack comes from the West Coast but has joined Sean "Puffy" Combs' rival East Coast stable. His debut album extends the vocabulary of rap with grooves and samples lifted from the likes of Kool & The Gang, speaking to an audience who remembers when the term R'n'B meant something far dirtier than mellifluous swing beats.

Mase, of course, hasn't just sprung from nowhere – he guested with Mariah Carey on "Honey" and with Puff Daddy on "I'll Be Missing You", so his audience was already primed for his fluid and conversational style.

The single also has an instrumental version with a strut reminiscent of the glory days of The Meters.

If you think you don't like rap, this may just be the one to change your mind.

Nigel Williamson

VARIOUS ARTISTS
DISRAELI YEARS
Dressed To Kill ★★★★

Limited edition, five-CD psychedelic collection – and it includes The Beatles

WITH its exploding psychedelic sleeve and title reminiscent of Cream's 1967 classic, *Disraeli Gears*, this five-disc set trumpets much: The Beatles, Hendrix, Clapton, The Yardbirds, Captain Beefheart. And it's only £9.99. "What?" you may gasp in wonderment.

Well, you get the usual: Melanie, Donovan, The Lovin' Spoonful, The Flowerpot Men. Donovan's "Sunny Goodge Street", with its *"violent hash smoker"*, is still sublimely late Sixties, while The Small Faces' "Itchycoo Park" is pure 1967 fantasy pop.

But The Beatles? A group that never licence anything out? Here is "Cry For A Shadow", an instrumental pre-Apple, there to tantalise.

Hendrix gets two cuts, a live "Red House" and something called "Two In One Goes". Inside covers are a pastiche of *Sgt Pepper* and stills from *Apocalypse Now*. There's even a half-hour John Lennon interview.

Surely there is something here for everyone and, unbelievably, 90 tracks for less than a tenner!

But hurry – it's a limited edition.

Mark Prendergast

THE FOUR SEASONS
EDIZIONE D'ORO
Ace ★★★★

The best of Frankie Vallie and Co

BY evolving their wailing, lush, doo-wop sound, The Four Seasons were one of the few American combos to survive the Sixties British invasion. By groovy, heavy 1968, however, when this double hits album appeared (with a hopefully trippy, Rococo design), they were dad's music.

Nowadays, once past the irresistibly up-beat 1962/3 doo-pop of "Sherry" and "Peanuts", it's the genuinely impressive 1964-66 symphonic pop aspirations of "Big Man In Town" and "Working My Way Back To You" which stand up.

Vegas is never far away, but the best of Bob Crewe's productions stand with the best of the period.

Kit Aiken

GARTH BROOKS

SEVENS *Capitol* ★ ★

The brat in the hat is back

A SERIOUS, behind-the-scenes hardball game preceded the release of this album after Brooks' last effort sold a disappointing four million (these terms are all relative, but 1990's *No Fences* had shifted 13 million). Brooks blamed his record label and, before he would allow them to release *Sevens*, he demanded the dismissal of the label president, no less. After a four-month face-off, the brat in the hat got his way.

Such corporate shoot-outs fit ill with the simple cowboy image Brooks attempts to portray on the album, full of down-home country philosophy and cornbread sentiment. Revealingly, the best song is the duet, "In Another's Eyes", with Trisha Yearwood. Despite Brooks' boardroom victory, you can't help feeling that the so-called hat acts are losing the creative battle and it is the women (Yearwood, Shania Twain, Martina McBride and others) who are currently setting the pace in Nashville.

Nigel Williamson

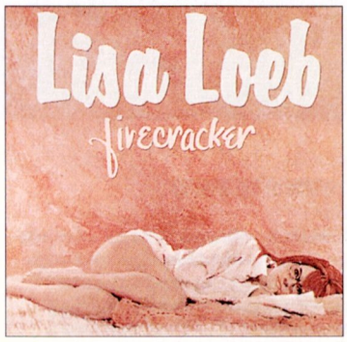
LISA LOEB

FIRECRACKER *Geffen* ★ ★ ★

The return of the bespectacled waif

"STAY (I Missed You)" was a genuine breath of fresh air – quirkily irresistible, it was hardly surprising that it hit the top of the charts both sides of the Pond, and the fact that Ms Loeb looked like a sexy librarian didn't hurt at all. But since nothing that remarkable followed, she appeared to be a one-hit wonder and nothing more.

Until now. True, there's nothing earth-shaking here, but these are genuinely



intelligent love songs with tunes. *"The time between meeting and finally leaving is sometimes called falling in love,"* La Loeb observes, recounting a tale of Western romance set in motels and diners reminiscent of both Dave Alvin and Rickie Lee Jones, driven by gorgeous strings. "Let's Forget About It" is a probable hit, "Jake" is intriguing and – a couple of duff tracks notwithstanding – there's certainly enough here to give the likes of Morisette and Crowe a run for their money.

Peter Hogan

THE RESIDENTS

OUR TIRED, OUR POOR, OUR HUDDLED MASSES

Euro Ralph ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The best of the enigmatic eyeballed iconoclasts

WHAT do you do if the world doesn't quite come up to scratch? If you're The Residents, you respond by making your own world, and – the important part – making that world address the real world in a critical manner. This, in a nutshell, is what the giant eyeballs' entire career has been about. From the sneering *avant*-pop exercises of *Meet The Residents* (1974), with its crudely graffiti'd Beatles sleeve, and *The Third Reich'n'Roll* (1975), with its mutant transformations of Sixties pop, through to the American Composers series of albums featuring their peculiar homages to such as Hank Williams, Sousa and James Brown, The Residents have been engaged in a critical dialectic with pop culture which, around the time of *Eskimo* (1979), widened to become a more broad-based anthropological study of Western consumerist culture in general.

This, indeed, is the significance of the eyeball-heads, introduced for that album and retained ever since: The Residents are presented as all-seeing observers, through whose penetrating gaze we might, perhaps, perceive our world a little differently.

Our Tired, Our Poor, Our Huddled Masses is a four-CD set summarising the group's career, albeit in typically Residential style: the first two CDs, *Washington* and *Lincoln*, offer a reverse-chronological "Album History", with stand-out individual tracks from *The Commercial Album* and *Duck Stab/Buster & Glen* nestling alongside a series of album "Concentrates", five-to-10-minute-long condensations of entire LPs, each containing more ideas than the average Britpop career.

The third CD, *Jefferson*, covers the band's "Singles History", perhaps the most determinedly perverse, uncommercial series of releases in pop history. Their critical agenda means that many of the singles are cover versions, dark and sinister interpretations of things like "Jambalaya", "Kaw-liga", "Hit The Road Jack", "Don't Be Cruel" and "Jailhouse Rock", which strip the originals of their cosy familiarity, and in most cases of their melodies. But what's lost is more than compensated for by the new layers of meaning the songs accrue. Their version of "Satisfaction", for instance, is still guaranteed to clear parties in under three minutes, its barrage of distorted guitars and voices a more

The Residents: all-seeing observers

Redferns

The eyes have it

accurate evocation of true dissatisfaction than even Devo's deconstructed cover.

The CD also offers an opportunity to acquire the ultra-rare *The Beatles Play The Residents* and *The Residents Play The Beatles*, the A-side of which, "Beyond The Valley Of A Day In The Life", presents a stunning (pre-sampler) montage of Fabs moments and dialogue on which Lennon's looped assertion, "Please, everybody, if we haven't done what we could have done, we've tried," is cruelly mocked both by a Resident voice and by the piece itself, surely the true heir to "Revolution No 9".

The final CD, *Roosevelt*, is the most interesting for aficionados, containing as it does a "History Mystery" of outtakes and off-cuts including 14 minutes of "Hallowed Be They Ween", an excerpt from the unreleased *Baby Sex* project from 1971. It concludes, appropriately enough, with the recording of a riot at an early Residents performance. Still anonymous after all these years, and still putting the world to rights in their own bizarre fashion, The Residents' very existence is something of a triumph in the dull, corporate world of modern pop.

Don't people have ideas any more?

Tom Wyndham

RICHARD THOMPSON

SMALL TOWN ROMANCE *Hannibal* ★ ★ ★

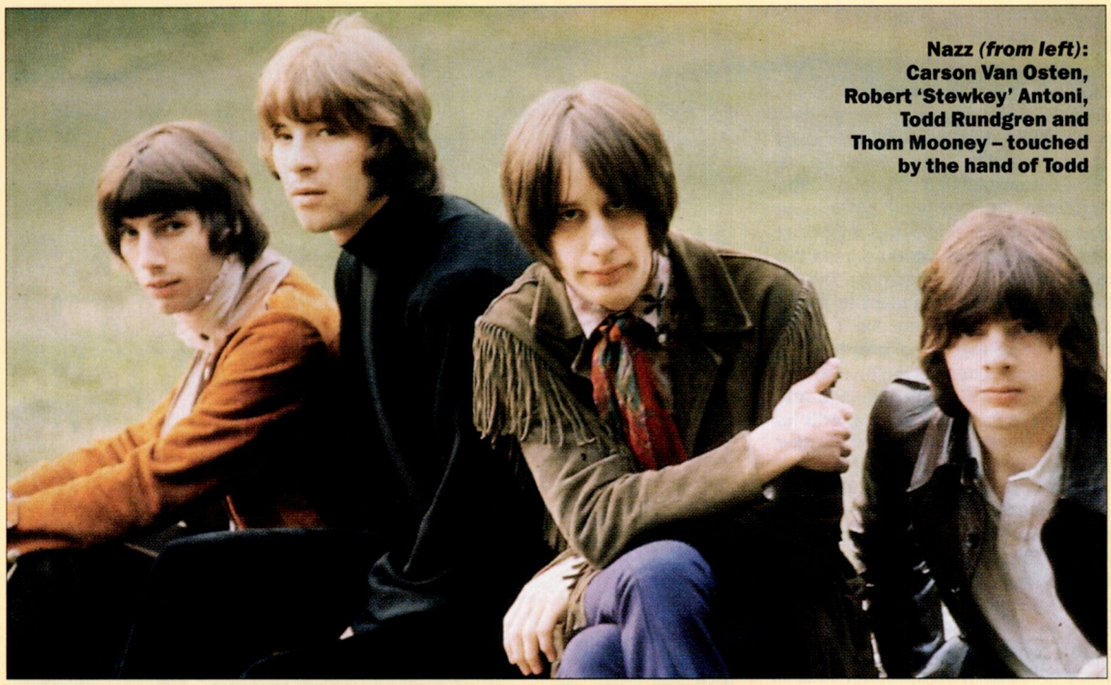
Rare, once-deleted live classic from 1982

A LIVE album recorded on two low-key New York City dates in 1982, this is gold-dust Thompson didn't want released and, when it was, had deleted in seconds, since when the thing has achieved mythic status and changed hands for silly money.

It makes for uneasy listening. In 1982, Richard and Linda had split nastily to the anguished fanfare of *Shoot Out the Lights*, and the subtext lingers on. This is straight-talking and raw, much of it the duo's words now interpreted solo. There's nowhere to hide and, though Thompson was unhappy with the quality, you can feel the width in the breaking voice and constant throat-clearing. "Beat The Retreat" is the confession of a man who can't walk away. "For Shame Of Doing Wrong" is self-abnegation, with a strained *"I wish I was a fool for you again"* coda. A falsely chirpy reading of "Honky-Tonk Blues" beats Hank Williams' original for self-pity, while the title tune is a vicious indictment of those who know you, or think they do – *"See, she never loved him, anyway."* The guitar comes into its own on the instrumental, "Roll Over, Vaughan Williams," and the closing number, "Meet Me On The Ledge", collects in its chorus an impossibly poignant string of notes.

Includes bonus tracks from the original CD for extra laceration.

Glyn Brown



Nazz *(from left)*: Carson Van Osten, Robert 'Stewkey' Antoni, Todd Rundgren and Thom Mooney – touched by the hand of Todd

Redferns

Mods and rockers

NAZZ
FROM PHILADELPHIA
Distortions ★ ★ ★

Odds'n'sods collection from Todd Rundgren's power poppers

ALTHOUGH they were from Philadelphia, spiritually Nazz were Home Counties Anglophile mods to a man. They formed in 1967 with a name derived from The Yardbirds' "Nazz Are Blue" ("Nazz" was also an early nickname for Jimmy Page), a bulldozing riff adapted from The Who's "Can't Explain". Nazz had a rock backbone to match Cream.

They were hard but they could do pretty, too, as evinced by the gleaming ballads on their first album, *Nazz*. Defined as a garage band on Lenny Kaye's *Nuggets*, their creative nucleus – songwriter Todd Rundgren, primarily – always promised something a lot less primal.

While Rundgren has gone on to world renown as gadgeteer, producer and heartmelting slushmaster, little has been heard of his old mouthpiece, Robert "Stewkey" Antoni. Last seen fronting Sick Man Of Europe, an early Seventies incarnation of Cheap Trick, he has now mysteriously resurfaced with a sackful of Nazz demos. *From Philadelphia* isn't quite the batch of dusted-down, unheard gems that fans might have anticipated. Instead, it features songs spanning the band's three albums, with one exclusive work, "Nazz Commercials": snatches of melody and general tomfoolery clearly inspired by *The Who Sell Out*.

US label Distortions claim that the Rhino reissues of the Nazz's three albums proper – *Nazz*, *Nazz Nazz* and *Nazz III* – were poorly remastered, but *From Philadelphia* offers no evidence of that. These are essentially unfortified demos and little more; zingy power-poppers like "Open My Eyes" (the one with *that* riff) and "Lemming Song" rock nowhere near as hard as their fully-fledged counterparts.

Poignant, however, is the burgeoning dreamrock of the young Rundgren, sung with manly sensitivity by Stewkey and – on "Only One Winner" – a bashful Todd himself. For the fuzzy charm of this Anglophile powerhouse, without the power, *From Philadelphia* is edifying. For something more exclusive, we'll have to wait until Stewkey unearths the rest of his archives later this year.

Tom Cox

INSIDE TRACK

Robert 'Stewkey' Antoni

We've heard nothing from Nazz for nearly three decades. Why the sudden decision to revisit the archives?

"In the last couple of years I've learned that I need a liver transplant, so I'm on an active list here in the US, although any proceeds I make off this wouldn't even come close to the funds I need. But the main reason is because I want to start my musical career again as soon as this medical situation is taken care of."

Are you still on good terms with the rest of the band?

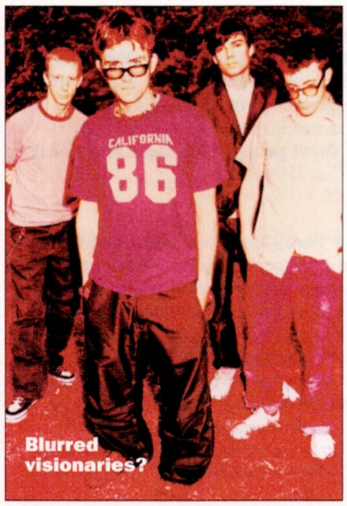
"I haven't spoken to them in a long time. Todd and myself parted ways. Carson Van Osten [bass] is a cartoonist for Disney, and Thom Mooney [drums] is somewhere in California doing I don't know what."

The name Nazz came from The Yardbirds track, "Nazz Are Blue". Is this the only source?

"It came from an old, black, jazz rapper called Lord Buckley as well. He used biblical terminology, and he referred to Jesus as 'The Nazarean' or 'The Naz'."

Nazz are famed for the inclusion of "Open My Eyes" on the Sixties garage compilation, *Nuggets*. Did you think of yourselves as a garage band?

"Nazz? A garage band? Nooo. We were a live band, like The Who: four instruments and a singer. But Todd also used to write some beautiful love songs, which I loved to sing. I guess I'm a balladeer at heart."



Blurred visionaries?

BLUR
PARKLIFE ★ ★ ★ ★
THE GREAT ESCAPE ★ ★ ★ ★
Food/EMI

Blur's third and fourth albums reissued

AH, the golden years of Britpop. Of course, these albums are too recent to get any real perspective, but we already know that when the history of Nineties pop is written, Blur will be counted among the top significant players.

Certainly, the Blur versus Oasis hype is already looking a bit silly – different jobs for different bands.

In terms of texture, range and plain good playing, there's just no comparison. It may be that posterity will have a problem with Damon Albarn's slack-jawed, beady-eyed posturing and his jilted John-as-Chelsea-supporter singing, but the boy has undeniable insight and imagination.

And while singles like "Parklife", "The Universal" and "Girls And Boys" will be identified as helping to define an era, the albums are full of less obvious gems: the chilling, Specials-like "Fade Away", the blatant Kinks homage (like most of it, let's admit) "It Could Be You", and the delightful Scott Walker-esque "To The End".

In retrospect, it's possible to detect that the end of this vari-pop approach was nigh; even the pernickety arrangements and production can't quite disguise the perhaps too frequent re-appearance of those favourite chord and rhythm patterns.

Still, when Sir Paul McCartney was asked which of today's bands he would want to be in and answered, knowingly, "Well, it's not going to be Blur, is it?", he was misinformed.

Kit Aiken

SPACE
INVASION OF THE SPIDERS
Gut ★ ★

A limited-edition double-LP of remixes, alt takes and unreleased songs

TO fill the gap before their second LP proper, the Liverpool quartet offer us a skanking version of "Neighbourhood", the remixes being fairly formulaic, four-to-the-floor, Cream-friendly techno.

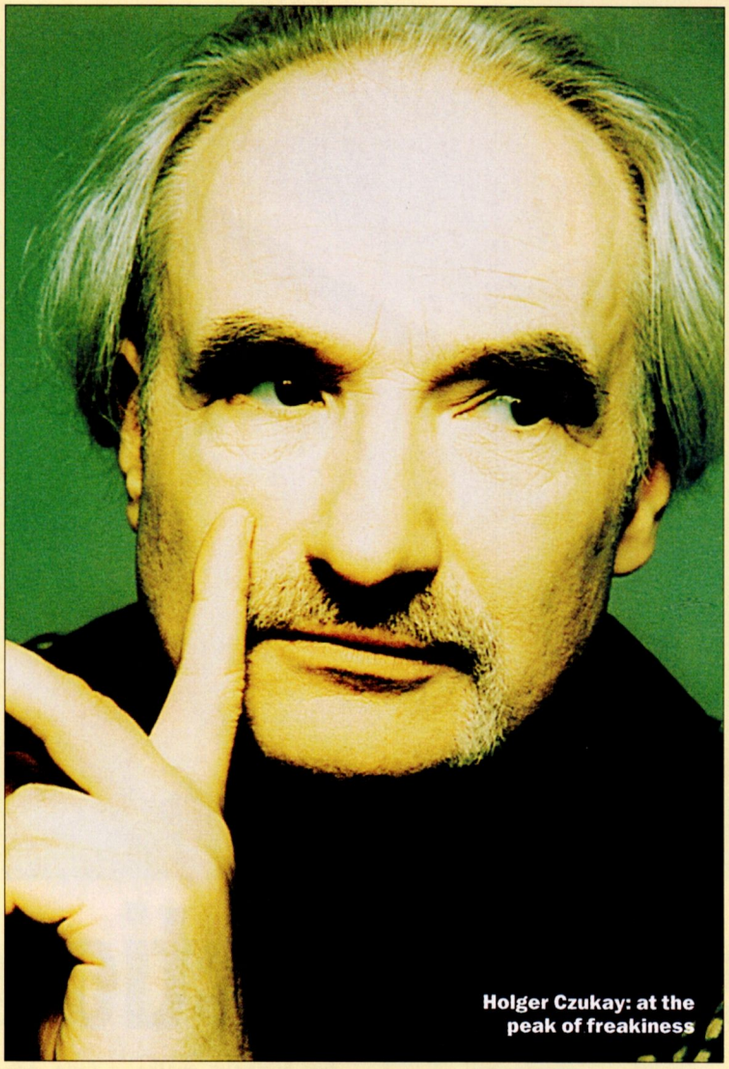
It's on the second disc that things get interesting, thanks to Jamie Space's schizophrenic vocals which range from a psychotic Ray Davies on "Turn Me On To Spiders", to the Mexican pimp drawl of "Children Of The Night". Along with bizarre lyrics (*"You treat me like an influenza/You think I'm an idiot cos I'm not in Mensa"*), brittle post-punk guitars and spaced-out electronic burbling, this makes for an original, if not necessarily loveable, collection.

Robert McTaggart

HOLGER CZUKAY
MOVIES ★★★★
ON THE WAY TO THE PEAK OF NORMAL
★★★★★
IRMIN SCHMIDT
IMPOSSIBLE HOLIDAYS/MUSK AT DUSK
★★★★
Spoon

Reissued solo albums from former members of German pioneers Can

Canned goods


Holger Czukay: at the peak of freakiness

THE seemingly perpetual Can revival continues with these solo re-releases. Holger Czukay's 1979 masterpiece, *Movies*, is an especially welcome reissue. With its infinitely funky, picaresque musical meanderings, mischievous cut-ups and samples from short-wave radio, it's the unacknowledged progenitor of all modern avant-dance music, from Coldcut to Loop Guru. "Cool In The Pool" is cut-up to the max, with Holger Czukay coming on like Edward Scissorhands on E in the editing room, while "Persian Love" beautifully samples *muezzin* fragments of Arabic pop singers. From the ridiculous to the sublime.

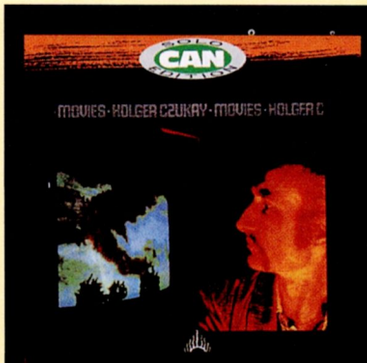
On The Way To The Peak Of Normal (1981) is less well known but perhaps even more remarkable. Whereas *Movies* has been absorbed and acted on by the post-rave generation, there is stuff happening on *On The Way* . . . that remains out there on its own, undeveloped. "Ode To Perfume", for example, is continuously morphing, collapsing in on itself under the weight of its own eclecticism, while "Fragrance" is as near as rock has got to a sort of musical Cubism.

Czukay is rock's own Salvador Dali. Constantly inventive yet fond of recurring musical motifs such as his maniacal trumps of French horn, his permanent flux of musical ideas might be unlistenable if it weren't for the funky, broad-beamed groove constantly churning away underneath it all.

Irmin Schmidt was the most senior of the Can members, who had many years behind him as a classical conductor and a composer of television and movie soundtracks before he joined Can.

Since the suspension of Can's activities, he's done a great deal of film music as well as projects such as "Toy Planet" in which, more vividly and articulately than most, he's conjured up musical soundscapes for imaginary utopias/dystopias. *Musk At Dusk* (1987) and *Impossible Holidays* (1991) both feature lyrics by Can obsessive Duncan Fallowell, and range from eerie, post-Brechtian barbed cabaret pastiches through more amorphous, ghostly stuff reminiscent in atmosphere of vast holiday hotels closed for the season to a sort of MOR from Mars that defies description.

More concentrated than Czukay's stuff but just as singularly freaky.
David Stubbs



INSIDE TRACK
Holger Czukay

You recorded *Movies* between 1977 and 1979, when Can had supposedly "split". Yet all the Can members play on it. How come?

"It wasn't a great angry split between us. But, at that point, they were more interested in becoming a professional, super-rhythmic band, and I had other ideas. So, they would play stuff during the day and I would come in at night – the night watchman! – and edit it."

***Movies* predates the whole dance/sampling revolution by nearly a decade. But you'd been using those editing methods for some time.**

"Yes. Since 1969, on *Tago Mago*. Then, we would edit to cut out mistakes. Until we discovered that sometimes the mistakes were the most interesting bits. And that was when we started to 'sample' ourselves. Stockhausen was the first musician to use short wave radio, however, in his piece, 'Kurzwelle', in which the whole orchestra played with short-wave radios. But certainly today, all modern electronic music is about bringing these different worlds together."

What was *On The Way To The Peak Of Normal* all about?

"The opening piece on that album took me four years to produce! I edited it over and over again. My idea was to edit out from the piece everything I could so that all that was left was a 'normal' piece of MOR music, a nice melody, easy listening. In other words, to reach the peak of normal. Whether it is easy listening is another question!"

alpaca
THE HIGH LLAMAS
COLD AND BOUNCY
the new album out now
on deluxe packaged compact disc and double long playing vinyl

on tour
January
29 Brighton concorde
30 Bristol Fleece & Firkin
31 Wolverhampton Varsity
February
1 Leeds Duchess
3 Glasgow Cathouse
4 Edinburgh Venue
5 Newcastle Riverside
6 Manchester Hop & Grape
7 Sheffield Leadmill
8 Nottingham Sam Fay's
also available on compact disc
Santa Barbara
(never before released in the uk)
Gideon Gaye
Hawaii

Air: visionaries from Versailles

The French collection

AIR
MOON SAFARI
Virgin ★★★★

KID LOCO
A GRAND LOVE STORY
Yellow ★★★★★

Debuts from two Gallic, West Coast-influenced etherealists

Do you remember last summer? The dusty roads that lead to secret places and the song that rhymed *"mixer tapes"* with *"landscapes"*.

At first, both Air and Kid Loco seemed to be about these lost moments, each new track like an already disintegrating polaroid. This, the hip new electronic sound from France, evinced a "nostalgic modernism" that had more in common with Truffaut than the Dimitri From Paris/Daft Punk axis.

There was even speculation that Air and Kid Loco were the same person, so stylised were each of their releases (cf. Air's *Premiers Symptomes* and Kid Loco's *Pop Porn Blue Series*).

Who else sounded so contemporary yet so in debt to the golden sounds of The Beach Boys, Jimmy Webb, Love *et al*? No one.

It just so happened that three people had arrived at roughly the same place at the same time; two serious young men from Versailles (Air), and the awesome Kid, a stoned Parisian conceptualist.

So that was last summer's soundtrack: slo-mo chord changes and elegiac atmospherics.

Ironically, both now release debut albums within weeks of each other, and expectations are high.

Air, in particular, are being unveiled with some ponciness by their label, Virgin, who are celebrating *Moon Safari* by setting off some unmanned balloons. In a way it's hard to imagine Air approving of such an extrovert gesture, so discreet and controlled is everything else about their LP.

Opener "La Femme D'Argent", glides in beautifully, mysteriously. Like most of Air's music, it's led by Nicolas Godin's superfluid bass playing.

Air, musos to a man, know just when to eschew maximalism for simplicity. This is music for the mind. Air have their own home studio, a few analogue synths, a tuba, synthetic handclaps and some great ideas. It's only when Air's music connects with the outside world that you realise how introspective is the vision shared by Godin and partner JB Dunckel.

So far, all attempts to remix Air have failed. They seem almost too precious for successful collaboration, and here, session vocal tracks float by unattached to the music.

Kid Loco, by contrast, seems like he'd always be up for mixing it up: *A Grand Love Story* is a far more outward affair.

Uplifting, spiritual and esoteric, it seems to share the same groovy gregariousness that made the last Cornershop LP such a triumph. The title itself underlines the scale of ambition, chords tumbling out as The Kid sets up unique locations for each song.

"She Wolf Daydreaming" finds him adroitly soundtracking a Japanese porno film, while "She's My Lover" is a serenade to his sweetheart on a particularly magical North African night.

That exotic and rare.

As with the Air LP, it's astonishing what Kid Loco achieves with what is, basically, a budget set-up. Even – especially – traditionalists reared on the home recordings of The Beach Boys will be able to appreciate this outlandish music.

Stephen McRobbie

TONY HATCH
HATCHBACK *Sequel* ★★

Second compilation taken from pop composer's instrumental LPs, '65-75

OF the pack of Sixties orchestral britpop Bacharach-wannabe hacks, Tony Hatch was one of the more convincing. His writing for Pet Clark ("Don't Sleep In The Subway"), aspired to – and achieved – a comparable urbane tricksiness. Sinatra even deigned to record "Call Me" and "Downtown" (with discernible disdain, admittedly) on his *Strangers In The Night* album.

Hatch is best remembered as the cruellest judge on the unnecessarily brutal Seventies talent show, *New Faces*, and as the composer of such treasures as the *Crossroads* and *Neighbours* themes. *Hatchback* displays an ear for certain genre nuances (along with TV 'tec themes, there are sambas and even a Philly "Hustle") and there's the odd stirring theme ("Where Are You Now", a hit for wife Jackie Trent), but the playing is stiff as a corpse, and the whole doesn't often rise above soulless hackery.

Even cool lounge watchers should approach with caution.

Kit Aiken

JIM MORRISON: RIDERS ON THE STORM
NARRATED BY KRIS KRISTOFFERSON
Laserlight ★★★

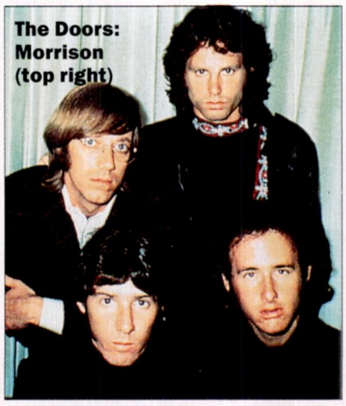
***Jackanory* meets The Lizard King**

A BIOGRAPHY via interviews, with Kristofferson in the Melvyn Bragg role, and every voice you want is here, apart from Morrison's, which is rather a significant lack. There's not too much of the Doors' music, either, which might have illustrated the changes in Morrison we hear so much about. Nevertheless, it's neat to hear the history, which can be read in any number of books, brought to life by those who were there.

Much more fun than recording details are the insights into personal weirdness: Danny Sugarman's stories about Jim magnetising psychos ("You talk to anyone who's been in a mental hospital – they're Doors fans"); and producer Paul Rothchild's observation that the girls Jim liked the most were freaks ("stray dogs, man – like, beat-up go-go dancers into demonism"), which explains why he did his best to turn girlfriend Pamela Courson into a basket case.

Probably the best part of all, though, is Kristofferson's growling, gumshoe delivery – he makes the whole thing sound like a sordid potboiler, which Morrison would no doubt have loved.

Glyn Brown



The Doors: Morrison (top right)

Star-ship twofer

ALEX CHILTON

LIKE FLIES ON SHERBET/LIVE IN LONDON

See For Miles ★★★★

Double of Chilton's 1980 solo debut and live set of the same year

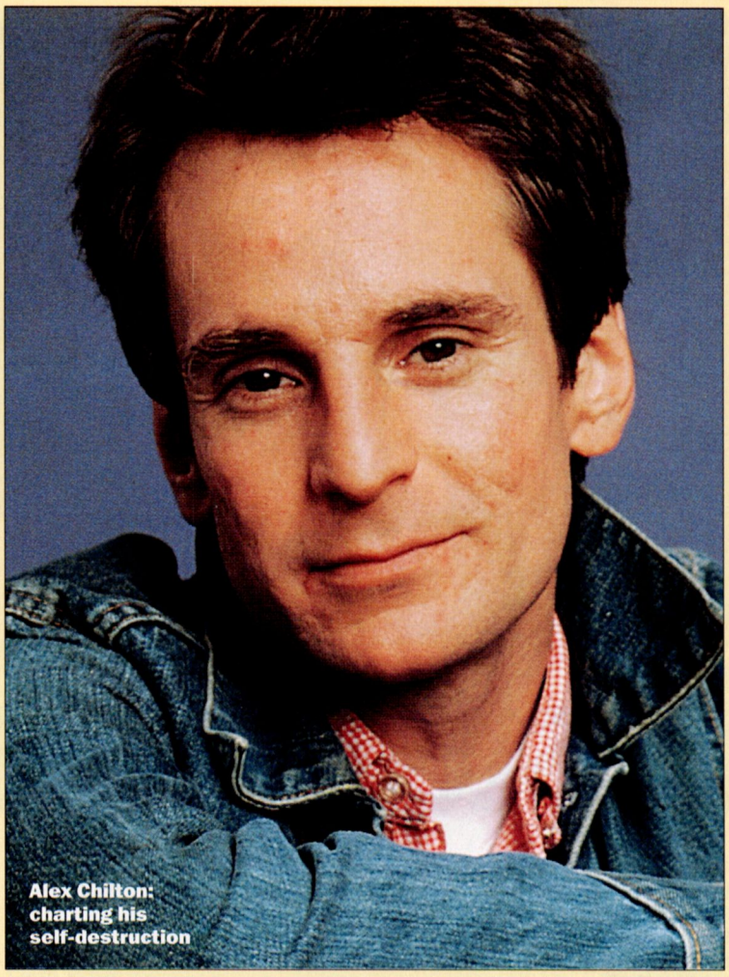
LIKE Flies On Sherbet is the kind of album that you just don't hear anymore, but then there wasn't much like it when it originally appeared in 1980. Alex Chilton had returned to Ardent Studios with producer Jim Dickinson for the first time since 1974's masterpiece, Big Star's *3rd/Sister Lovers*. The results come close to sounding like the purest rock'n'roll album ever made: fluff-fed intros, slurred vocals, backing vocals from what sounds like a choir of fuck-ups, rockabilly rave-ups, ghostly country'n'western covers ("Waltz Across Texas"), Lennon-esque weirdness (the title track) and a nod to Chilton's power pop reputation ("Hey! Little Child"). It's also the blueprint for everything The Replacements later believed in: get trashed up and hit the record button.

On May 28, 1980, *Live In London* was recorded at Dingwall's in Camden with a backing band that included members of The Soft Boys and The Vibrators. They tear through a barely rehearsed set that includes his Box Tops smash, "The Letter", classic Big Star material, four tracks from *Sherbet*, deranged seven-inch single "Bangkok", and a scattering of rockabilly covers which were influenced by Chilton's recent production work for The Cramps. Unfortunately, to fit all this on one CD, the live take of "No More The Moon Shines On Loreena" is left off, but you do get cool liner notes.

At the end of 1980, Chilton's "lost weekend" finally ended and he moved to New Orleans to clean up. If you really want to chart his self-destruction, listen to Big Star's *3rd*, the *Bach's Bottom* collection and this new CD without interruption.

Exhilarating; terrifying.

Nick Johnstone



Alex Chilton: charting his self-destruction

THE BEACH BOYS

SURF'S UP

Capitol ★★★★

The Boys' eco-consciousness phase

MISLEADINGLY titled, this album has little of the optimistic innocence of early Beach Boys recordings. Elegiac in mood, exploring loosely connected ecological and social themes, and making use of the then-novel Moog, this is a transitional record. But that's not to say it is unsatisfactory – only Mike Love's "Student Demonstration Time" (a re-write of "Riot In Cell Block No 9") is below par – the rest of the material stands beside their very best work. Carl Wilson's "Long Promised Road", Bruce Johnston's "Disney Girls" and Al Jardine's "Don't Go Near The Water" are examples of just how excellent the band's non-Brian Wilson-originated material could be.

Depressed after the commercial failure of *Sunflower* and distracted by other projects, Brian contributed only three songs to *Surf's Up*: the oddly moving "A Day In The Life Of A Tree" (sung by manager Jack Rieley), the beautiful "'Til I Die" and the peerless title track – a legendary *Smile* out-take scorned by the rest of the band on account of Van Dyke Parks' opaque lyricism.

Surf's Up is pricey at £15, but indispensable nonetheless.

Mark Brend

VARIOUS ARTISTS

AND THE TIMES THEY WERE A-CHANGIN': CLASSIC COVERS OF BOB DYLAN

Debutante/PolyGram ★★★

Bob-buffs with stars in their eyes

DYLAN covers are generally more successful than, for example,Beatles covers, not because of any artistic shortcomings in the originals but because Dylan's acoustic phase(s) provide opportunities for fleshing out beautiful but stark originals – say, The Byrds' shimmering "Mr Tambourine Man" and Hendrix' epic "All

Along The Watchtower". Dylan's own unlikely favourite of his renderers was Manfred Mann, but this writer would nominate early Rod Stewart as his most sensitive interpreter: his exquisite version of "Only A Hobo" is the stand-out track on a useful compilation which rounds up virtually all the most important readings of the work of rock's greatest solo artist.

Sean Egan

ENNIO MORRICONE

THE SINGLES COLLECTION (VOLUME 2)

Cinemavox ★★★★★

Two-CD collection of rare Italian 45rpm soundtracks, 1969-81

VOLUME 2? There was no Volume 1. Still, this is fantastic stuff. Morricone (born in Rome in 1928) could play many instruments, most importantly the trumpet, and conduct any ensemble into a frenzy. He's known for his great blends – harmonica with distorted guitar, high-pitched pipes with luscious strings. Everyone has heard his Spaghetti Western stuff, so here is the lesser known (but equally brilliant) music from a range of European films starring Marcello Mastroianni, Nastassja Kinski, Jacqueline Bisset and Catherine Deneuve.

Angelic voices float above ice-cream parlour ambience; jews' harps twang as horns burp; a harpsichord picks out a delicate accompaniment to a fulsomely breathy trumpet sound as Morricone's trademark strings and voices fill in the background. It's all here in spades from the man who made schmaltz and sentimentality high art.

Mark Prendergast

CATATONIA

INTERNATIONAL VELVET

Warners ★★★

Second LP from promising Cardiff noisepoppers

ALMOST irresistible, though I hadn't intended to say so. On first listen, the opening tracks sounded like a doze through poppy pub pseudo-thrash, relying on Cerys Matthews' dulcet warble to get them on their feet.

Persevere, though, and the boys on the banjos get inventive, pulling their weight with everything from lazy Velvet Underground bass to brassy funeral waltz – so you go back to "Mulder & Scully" (track one) prepared to like it better. You still might not bother without Matthews' eccentric vigour, and it's not just the voice, which is smoky as a baby dragon and feral as Björk, complete with exotic rolled consonants. No, there's also a lyrical surrealism worthy of Alan Garner, from "Mulder & Scully" and its notion of boyfriend as UFO, to the torchy "Goldfish & Paracetamol", which ends up with *"tourniquet by crochet"* (possibly).

And who but a girl from the valleys could turn in the deeply biological *"My selfish gene/It fills my spleen/With bile"* and make it sound delicious?

Glyn Brown

SCOTT FOUR

RECORDED IN STATE

Satellite Records ★★★

Lo-fi country *noir* – from north London

WITH only a handful of live shows and a rare EP or two to their name, Scott Blixen's north London trio have established themselves as post-rave sweethearts of the rodeo, with vocalist Scott shaping up as a regular Neil Young of the North Circular.

For their debut LP, the sound remains closer to Nashville than Neasden, their saddle-sore beats sitting oddly with punkish lyrics detailing the squalid minutiae of their inner city bedsit lives – microwaves, penguin bars, bags of weed and *Newsnight*. But it's a frazzled noise, without the cheesy, crocodile-shoes trappings: the guitars are blue, the electronic doodlings are dubbily subdued, Scott's voice is gravelly and the fi is way down lo. Imagine Beck with the slacker's glam-trash trappings replaced with a world-weary, Lambchop-style, blue collar realism.

Excellent post-pub listening. Mix with Beth Orton and the upcoming Beta Band for a fuzzily folk-tinged start to '98.

Simon Lewis

Pixies: translocated from a dissident galaxy

Kevin Westenberg

Boston scree party

PIXIES

COME ON PILGRIM ★★★★
SURFER ROSA ★★★★★
DOOLITTLE ★★★★★
BOSSANOVA ★★★
TROMPE LE MONDE ★★★★
4AD

Incredible back catalogue from the precursors of grunge

NOT wishing to undermine the great man or anything, but when the former Black Francis shrugs off the finest group of the Eighties – his group – with the usual self-effacing "we were just a band" comments, we shouldn't take him too seriously. It's a common trait of musicians gifted with a unique, built-in weirdness to believe that they're totally normal. Pixies were four intuitive geniuses of a kind never stuck together in a studio before, and this fact alone immediately made them sound like nothing else. Unlike practically everyone who has tried to imitate them since, they didn't have to try to be different; they just were.

With 1986's mini LP, *Come On Pilgrim*, the Pixies didn't so much arrive as translocate from a dissident Latin community in a galaxy far, far away. Looking ordinary, they sang about VD, motorbikes, and a corpse called Ed; matching it all with racing Flamenco guitars and the low-tech clarity of the Violent Femmes. *Pilgrim* is, admittedly, the band's most "straightforward" album, but by the time Kim Deal makes her debut feline warble on "I've Been Tired", you can only fault the record for its brevity.

Surfer Rosa saw the Spanish swearing and open highways of its predecessor bastardised by production-chair psychopath Steve Albini. To this day, Pixies' second album sounds like it was recorded in a timber yard, guitars sawing and scraping as Deal and Francis holler and cackle over a dinner of raw bones. *Uncut*'s Chris Roberts once described the mischievous "Gigantic" as "'Sweet Jane' played by Sonic Youth with Jamie Lee Curtis in *Halloween* singing," and he wasn't wrong. Surfer Rosa is the Pixies at their brutal, spontaneous best – even the inter-song banter rocks.

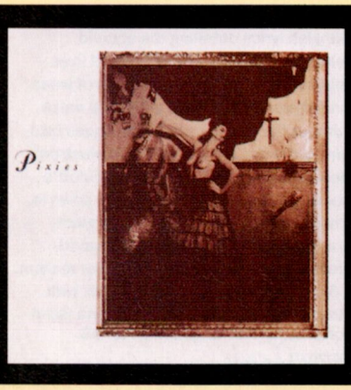
The first half of *Doolittle* is, astonishingly, even better. Mutilation meets zoology, sci-fi and waste as the nagging "Debaser", "Here Comes Your Man" and "Monkey Gone To Heaven" bump furiously into one another. Then the whole thing brilliantly falls to pieces with the wailing "No. 13 Baby" and Cowboy-Junkified "Silver". An uneven album, just like its successor.

On *Bossanova*, though, for once, the Pixies seem to be filling a role rather than reinventing rock music. The singalongs – "Velouria", "Dig For Fire" – although fantastic, sound calculated; and the surf sounds like filler.

Trompe Le Monde, 1991's "metal" effort, goes big on sci-fi, and the spontaneity returns. "Planet Of Sound", the title track, and "Head On", combine delinquent, galactic solos and cathedral-like harmonies to make for the Pixies' most sonically full-on, relentless work. Here, once again, this incredible band were sounding like preternaturally constructed beings without thinking about it.

If man is five, the devil is six, and God is seven, then the Pixies were somewhere way, way off the scale.

Tom Cox



INSIDE TRACK
Frank Black/Black Francis

Have you ever thought about reforming?
"No, that would be completely unnecessary. People imply that the climate is favourable now because of grunge, but I don't believe that. There have been loud guitars throughout rock history; they weren't invented in 1990."

What do you think of all the bands who claim your influence now?
"I don't want to sound like some complaining old college rock guy, but contemporary music doesn't do a lot for me. There was a cut-off point in the late-Eighties: I make my own records, therefore I only listen to what comes before me."

Do you miss the Pixies' chemistry?
"No, I think that's the one thing we never really had. There was no 'idea' other than: shut up, plug in, 'OK, guys, I've got this great song – it goes like this.'

"When we split, it wasn't because we couldn't have any more great 'visions'. It was just a case of, 'I can't stand being in this situation anymore, let me out.'"

PHISH

SLIP, STITCH AND PASS *EastWest* ★★★

Live set from the band touted as the new Grateful Dead

THE Grateful Dead comparisons that follow Phish around seem as much to do with their three-and-a-half hour live sets and the smoking habits of their audience as the quality of the music. Yes, Mike Gordon's loping basslines suggest he has been listening to Phil Lesh, guitarist Trey Anastasio noodles in a vaguely Garcia-ish way and, in true Dead-style, the vocals are crummy.

But there the comparisons cease, for what is often overlooked is that in Garcia and Bob Weir the Dead possessed a pair of very fine writers, and even their visits to the wildest shores of improvisation were usually bookended by conventional song structures.

On this 73-minute set, recorded live on their European tour earlier this year, Phish show utter contempt for such bourgeois concepts.

Nevertheless, they have their moments: "Weekapaug Groove" sounds like The Allman Brothers jamming on acid, and the freeform "Taste" is pretty cosmic, too.

Songs? Who needs them, man?

Nigel Williamson

PROPELLERHEADS

DECKSANDRUMSANDROCKANDROLL
Wall Of Sound ★★★★

Bond, block rockin' beats and beyond, from Bath's finest

IT *reeks* of class, this one. And a great title, too. What more do you want?

The debut album from Bath's Alex Gifford and Will White is a sleek, widescreen affair, executed with precision and ruthless efficiency, which elevates their obsession with Sixties soundtracks and fat beats into the super league.

In amid the singles – the demented 303 rush of "Bang On", the meaty "Take California", the *In Like Flint* pastiche of "Spybreak", and their epic take on John Barry's "On Her Majesty's Secret Service" – we get some fine new material, the best of which is "Oh Yeah", which resembles a Seventies Italian porn soundtrack, complete with a sleazy organ riff which lapdances its way round oh-so-slow hip hop drum loops.

But the show stopper is inevitably "History Repeating", featuring *Miss* Shirley Bassey. A brass'n'Hammond extravaganza straight from God's own cabaret (and the only track to feature lyrics), it's a sly indictment of club culture élitism.

Leaving the rest of the big beat crowd choking on their dust, the Propellerheads have managed to create a fine, near faultless album.

Michael Bonner

TOSHINORI KONDO AND DJ KRUSH

KI-OKU

R&S ★ ★ ★

Blunted jazz hop for weird beards

TOKYO scratch-master Krush was the first exponent of the esoteric Japanese version of hip hop to make an impression in the West with his early excursions on Mo'Wax, and did much to cement that label's popularity with the goatees'n'ganja set with his smoky, red-eyed cut-ups.

Krush was always dead serious about his jazz, and here proves his mettle by squaring up to elder statesman Kondo, a professional jazz trumpeter for over 30 years and the closest thing to Miles Davis to be found in the eastern hemisphere. And the beards will not be disappointed – the horns blow cool, the bass quakes like dub, the breaks nod along in blunted reverie and everyone's happy.

Just don't fall asleep with the spliff in your mouth.

Simon Lewis

THE ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

PLAYS THE MUSIC OF OASIS *Music Club* ★ ★

KASHMIR

SYMPHONIC LED ZEPPELIN *Point* ★ ★ ★ ★

Oasis and Led Zep get the full orchestral treatment!

THESE violins-go-groovy larks rarely work: they take the sex out of the rock'n'roll and the dignity out of the classicism. The Royal Phil gamely trot through the catalogue of the world's most overrated band, only to prove how dismal Gallagher's repetitive dirges actually are. They're forced to cheat, roping in electric guitars and rumpy-pumpy drums. Because, without the buzz, Oasis are nothing. Halfway through "Roll With It", you expect to see Bruce Forsythe high-kicking with The Tiller Girls: it's that silly.

Far more valid is the opus from Kashmir, the brainchild of (classically trained) Jaz Coleman and Youth, who've taken their Zeppelin homage very seriously (with the assistance of Philip Glass) and constructed a beautifully detailed set of instrumental interpretations. Of course, the Zep lent inherent grandeur to "All My Love" and "Going To California", but there's some exquisite nuance here. Both ambient and arcane, it has real presence.

Chris Roberts

GUY CHADWICK

LAZY, SOFT & SLOW *Setanta* ★ ★

Debut solo outing from House Of Love maestro

HOUSE Of Love were nothing if not prolific, but apart from 1988's eponymous debut, nothing really got past the goalposts. Eventually, despite some moody soundscapes and Chadwick's agonised vocals, HOL fell foul of grunge, and Chadwick retired with acute writer's block. On this evidence, produced by the Cocteaus' Robin Guthrie, he should have got Dyno-Rod in. Billed as "unashamed" romance, it's scarily low-gear, probably because there's not much mileage in requited love – boy gets girl and, as uncle Martin Fry will tell you, there the story ends.

At its best – "Soft & Slow", all slide guitar and Chris Isaak torpor, or "One Of These Days", where Hammond riffs and Chadwick's Gerry Rafferty-style delivery lets you add your own Tarantino subplot – it's easy listening. At its worst, it's sleep-inducingly samey. Monopoly, anyone?

Glyn Brown

PAUL WESTERBERG

GRANDPABOY

Monolyth/Soundproof ★ ★ ★ ★

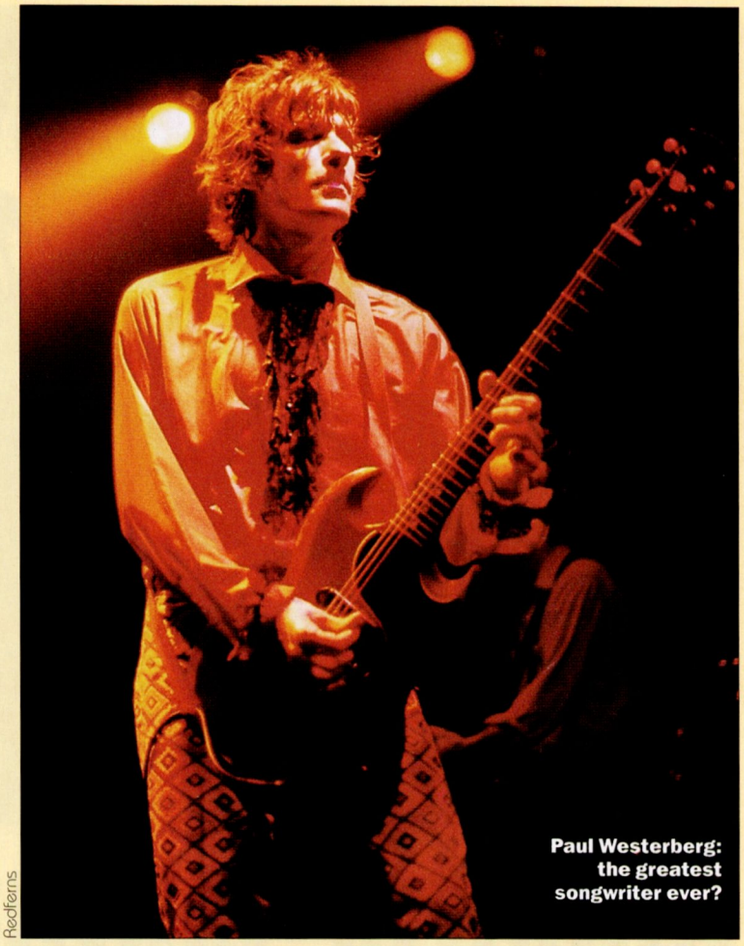
Third solo album from The Replacements' Paul Westerberg

FEW people understood ex-Replacements singer-songwriter Paul Westerberg's second solo record, *Eventually* (1996). It chronicled the often lonely life of a recovering alcoholic and struggled to accept former Replacements' guitarist Bob Stinsons' death. The album's commercial failure led to Westerberg severing his contract with Reprise.

Next year, we'll see Westerberg's debut for Capitol. In the meantime, he's knocked out a seven-inch single ("I Want My Money Back"/"Undone") and this mini-album, *Grandpaboy*, for a label started by a friend who played bass on the 1993 tour for Westerberg's solo debut, *14 Songs*. The tracks come with the warning:

"Grandpaboy was born somewhere. He plays guitar. Do not try to be his friend. He will not like you."

None of the songs clip three minutes and most return to Westerberg's roots. "Hot 'Un" is a low-down, dirty slice of Stonesy R'n'B, complete with Westerberg's competent sax playing and a stomping drum machine. "Ain't Done Much" is a raunchy, bluesy stomp with a great singalong hook. He slips into country-punk terrains with "Psychopharmacology", a wry comment on the Prozac'n'Halcion generation. "Homelessexual" is an R'n'B throwaway. The seven-inch single, "I Want My Money Back", recalls 1987's "IOU", while the B-side, "Undone", is a laidback slice of folk rock.



Redferns

Paul Westerberg: the greatest songwriter ever?

Hip Replacement

Buried deep in this R'n'B meltdown is an acoustic ballad called "Lush And Green", which adds yet another beautiful confession to his already swollen bag of heartbreakers. It follows on from 1996's mortality ballad, "Good Day", with Westerberg standing over a loved one's grave and singing, *"I fall on you and hear thunder/I kiss the ground you lie under."* The way he sings the following lines confirms that few mean it like he does: *"I only sleep when spoken to/So I'll lay here still in mourning due."* God, such unflinching honesty. And then the refrain: *"Above you/All is lush and green."* Words to tattoo all over your heart.

I've said it before and I'll keep saying it: Paul Westerberg is the greatest songwriter of all time.

Nick Johnstone

Distributed by DISC Distribution Ltd (0181)-362-8111 through RTM, catalogue # MCD 1315

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Edsel ★ ★ ★ ★

Weird psychotronic pop from late Sixties USA

SUCH was the spreadeagled vision of their main sonic dabbler, Joseph Byrd, The United States Of America could have existed as two different bands, both radically different, both showcased on this, their lone LP (from 1968). The first model conjured up "I Won't Leave My Wooden Wife For You, Sugar", one of the most sensual and stupid songs of the Sixties, a quaint, strident, up-tempo affair best known for its inclusion on the seminal, post-psychedelic CBS compilation, *The Rock Machine Turns You On*.

The second, which dominates *The United States Of America*, is more elaborate: a future-obsessed, highbrow take on braying

Jefferson Airplane chants, textured with imaginary national anthems and space-gun zaps.

The fact that Byrd and his gadgets disappeared without taking either of his wibbling, modernised fantasies beyond curio status is a calamity. *The United States Of America* is a potent, low-rent space odyssey played from an inspirational outhouse.

Tom Cox

WILL SMITH

BIG WILLIE STYLE

Columbia ★ ★ ★

New album of swingbeat from the erstwhile Fresh Prince

IT'S probably about time for the backlash but I can feel nothing but admiration for this man. Kicking off his solo album with a dialogue concerning *"The artist formerly known as The Fresh Prince"*, and how he doesn't care whether he's *"keeping it real"* because those gangsta types would dearly love to have his money and his cars, Smith refuses to experience anything other than good humour about life in general.

It's been kind to him, and he's smart ➤

Otis Redding at Monterey: the gospel truth

Redferns

Counter culture club

VARIOUS ARTISTS
THE MONTEREY INTERNATIONAL POP FESTIVAL
Castle ★★★★
Four-CD box set of the 1967 Summer Of Love festival

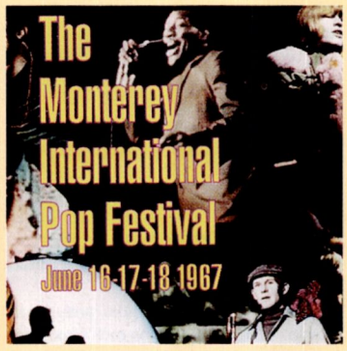
AFTER a period of time when the conjunction of the words "pop" and "festival" brought withering looks and a lengthy tirade against the perils of mud-bathing, the Nineties Rainbow Generation positively embrace the delights of sharing space in the great outdoors.

Newport apart, Monterey is widely regarded as the forebear of the modern day music fest in so far as it was the first attempt to make sense (and money) out of the Summer Of Love ethos. Despite its promise of music, love and flowers – be happy, be free; wear flowers, bring bells – Monterey was conspicuously well arranged; a first-class success with a varied programme to disabuse one of the notion that the Sixties was entirely populated by dipsticks. Hey, man, these cats were organised.

John Phillips and Lou Adler, respective leader and producer of The Mamas And The Papas, had the *nous* and the contacts to make their daydream a reality. Terry Melcher, Paul Simon and Johnny Rivers were persuaded to cough up investment funds and the perfect site was found in the former capital of California, named after the Count of Monterey. Phillips and Co appointed a nominal board of governors (among them Paul McCartney, Mick Jagger and Brian Wilson), and employed Andrew Oldham and Derek Taylor to handle international publicity and a medical SWAT team headed up by the splendidly named Dr Bowersocks. Afterwards, they pumped the profits into worthy causes – from free clinics to public television enterprises.

Then there was the music itself, comprising a bill of 31 major acts spread across three days in June. In line with its title, The Monterey International Pop Festival (the progressive rock concept was still a gleam in a marketing man's eye), the participants included The Association, Lou Rawls, Scott McKenzie and The Byrds, caught here in their live pomp with a set that marched across "Renaissance Fair" and took wing during "Have You Seen Her Face".

The ever popular melting-pot blues that characterised the West Coast's infatuation with urban R'n'B were as much a feature of TMIPF as the preponderance of psychedelic electricians *à la* Country Joe And The Fish, the Dead and the Airplane. Eric Burdon and Canned Heat aside, the real success stories for the kids in the six-dollar bleachers were inevitably sighting Jimi Hendrix, getting their heads blown off by The Who, and being given an object lesson in smartly suited soul from the



legendary and soon-to-be-late Otis Redding.

Burdon recalled the disbelief of the crowd on witnessing The Who's almighty blitzkrieg: "The climax of the show was just like a terrorist attack, with the bombs and the smoke." Dennis Hopper sensed the *zeitgeist* in Hendrix's fusion of the aesthetic and the physical. This was also the occasion when Hendrix, noting that The Beach Boys had pulled out at the 11th hour, kissed his Strat, set it alight and muttered, "And you'll never hear surf music again." Doh.

Even so, it was the gospel truth that Otis Redding provided which has subsequently fixed the festival's significance in music lore. Besides, you're unlikely to get trench foot by listening to this four-CD set. Light a joss stick, get your kit off and loosen up. This is the full Monterey.

Max Bell

enough to realise the only gracious thing he can do is celebrate.

Thus, an unchallenging set of light hip hop moves proves easily enjoyable ("Candy" features original writers Larry Blackmon and Cameo), and "Big Will" rhymes with wit and a grin. Even the stuff about being *"the best daddy in the world"* sounds charming and sincere.

The guy's an actor. The guy's a natural. The guy's a winner.

Chris Roberts

DUST JUNKIES
DONE AND DUSTED
Polydor ★
The return of MC Tunes

YOU can fool some of the magazines some of the time, but you can't fool us. Whether they're calling the bandwagon Big Beat this week or Skunk Rock, the Dust Junkies remain lumpen, uninspired, uninspiring and at least five years out of date – yet another clapped-out vehicle for MC Tunes spluttering in the dusty wake of bigger, better, faster breakbeat-fuelled machines like Propellerheads and Monkey Mafia.

Sorry, boys, but you don't get that much-needed old skool cred by calling your tracks things like "What Time Is It?" or "Get The Funk Up". You don't acquire gritty funk authenticity by churning out pedestrian blues licks like Lenny Kravitz's idiot cousins. You don't "keep it real" by rapping badly about your tough childhood on the streets of Lancashire. And you don't impress anyone with references to your naughty drug habits. So get back in the dole queue.

Today, Dust Junkies. Tomorrow, dustmen.

Simon Lewis

COME
GENTLY DOWN THE STREAM
Domino ★★★★
Fourth LP from NYC undergrounders

THIS is a characteristically challenging cohesion of cavalier brinkmanship, brooding passion and raw-nerve riffing. Following the relative calm of 1994's *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*, Thalia Zedek and Chris Brokaw have re-entered the uneasy listening arena with a vengeance. Tangential guitars intertwine and keening vocals scrape the stratosphere as the tangibly recharged quartet career from climax to climax.

Opening shot "One-Piece" is an exotic, Eastern-tinged smoulder that crackles with desperation. "Saints Around My Neck" is an epic rocker while "A Jam Blues" is a cortex-crushing caterwaul worthy of Jon Spencer.

Primal, visceral, irresistible.

Ian Fortnam

RYUICHI SAKAMOTO
DISCORD
Sony Classical ★★★
Ex-Yellow Magic Orchestra techno-man goes classical

JAPAN's Mr Pop goes back to his classical roots with this album about starvation and apocalypse, first aired at last year's Meltdown festival in the company of Laurie Anderson.

Snipped into four parts, early sections follow traditional Japanese ballad and percussive styles.

Then there's "Prayer", an ambient meditation mindful of John Cage.

The final section, "Salvation", contains contributions from Anderson, DJ Spooky, David Byrne, Patti Smith *et al* – a collage of music, DJ sound, narration and strings.

Intriguing.

Mark Prendergast

PEARL JAM

YIELD the new album. Includes the hit single Given To Fly

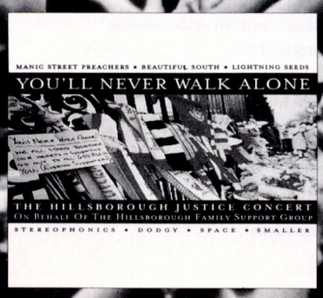
Available at: ABERDEEN One Up · PERTH Goldrush · GLENROTHES Coda · EDINBURGH Avalanche, Coda, Fopp · LIVINGSTON Coda · GLASGOW Avalanche, Echo, Fopp, Missing GREENOCK Rhythmic · PAISLEY Record Factory · MOTHERWELL Impulse · NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE Windows · MIDDLESBROUGH Playback · HULL Syd Scarborough · YORK Track Records HARROGATE Mix Music · KEIGHLEY Mix Music · SKIPTON Mix Music · LEEDS Way Ahead · HUDDERSFIELD Badlands · DONCASTER Track Records · SHEFFIELD Record Collector PRESTON Action Records · WIGAN Music Zone, Omega Music · BOLTON X Records · BURY Vibes · LEIGH Music Zone · STOCKPORT Music Zone · ALTRINCHAM Omega Music MACCLESFIELD Omega Music · CREWE Omega Music · NORTHWICH Omega Music · RHYL Kavern Records · LLANDUDNO Kavern Records · CHESTERFIELD Hudsons NOTTINGHAM Selectadisc, Way Ahead · DERBY Way Ahead · LEICESTER Ainley's · LOUGHBOROUGH Left Legged · HANLEY Mike Lloyd's · HINCKLEY Skandalous · NUNEATON What Records WOLVERHAMPTON Mike Lloyd's · WALSALL Sundown · BIRMINGHAM Highway 61, Plastic Factory, Swordfish, Tempest · COVENTRY Spinadisc · NORTHAMPTON Spinadisc BANBURY Chalky's · BICESTER Chalky's · OXFORD Chalky's · ABINGDON Modern Music · CHESHAM Track Records · LETCHWORTH David's · DISS Revolution · NORWICH CD Centre COLCHESTER Time Records · CHELMSFORD Slipped Discs · LEIGH-ON-SEA Fives · RAYLEIGH Fives · BILLERICAY Slipped Discs · WALTHAMSTOW Cavern · LONDON Crouch End, Terrapin Records, Soho, Going For A Song, Selectadisc, Sister Ray · SUTTON Hot Rocks · TUNBRIDGE WELLS Longplayer · SHOREHAM Atomic Sounds · CAMBERLEY Rock Box NEWBURY Planet Music · CHRISTCHURCH Trax · SWANSEA Musiquarium; BRIDGEND Hitman Music · CARDIFF Spillers · NEWPORT Hitman Music · MERTHYR TYDFIL Music Mania CHELTENHAM Badlands · BRISTOL Disc & Tape · YATE Kay's · WIMBOURNE Square · BARNSTAPLE S.N.V · TAUNTON S.N.V · EXETER Solo Music · TRURO Solo Music

CD digipak · Cassette · LP · MiniDisc 489365 2/4/1/8 EPIC

YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

RECORDED LIVE AT ANFIELD ON 10TH MAY 1997

THE HILLSBOROUGH JUSTICE CONCERT



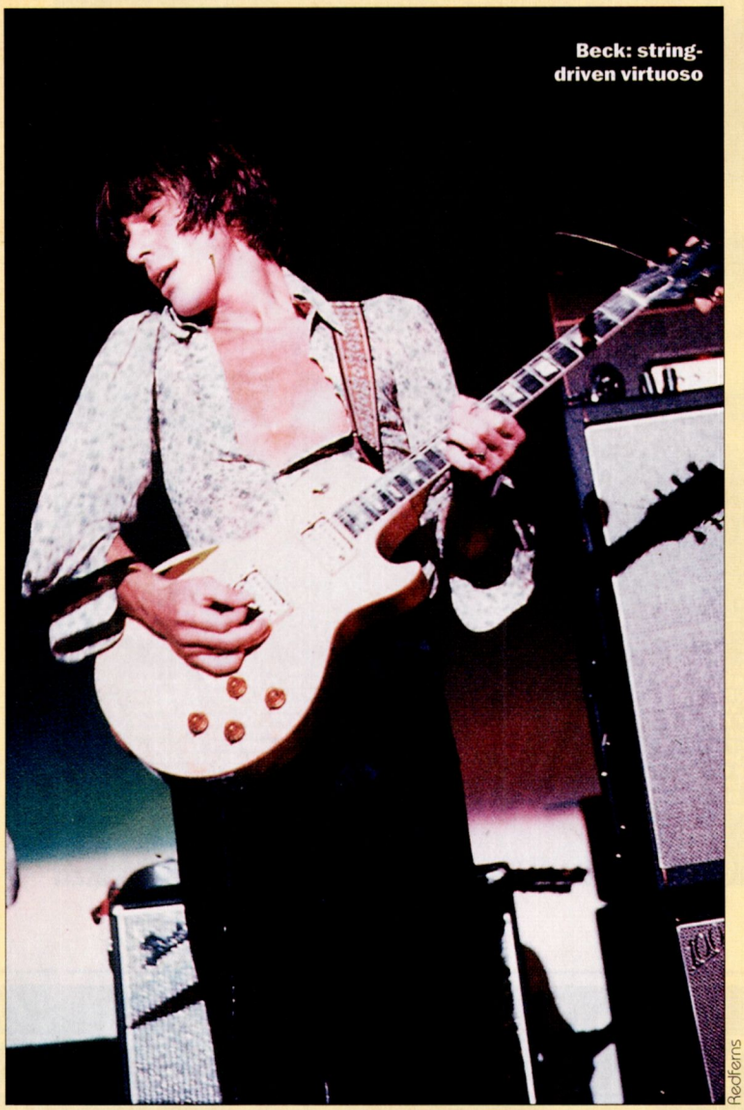
featuring

MANIC STREET PREACHERS, BEAUTIFUL SOUTH
LIGHTNING SEEDS, HOLLY JOHNSON, STEREOPHONICS
DODGY, SPACE, SMALLER

OUT NOW ON CD & CASSETTE

V2 RECORDS ARE DONATING ALL IT'S PROFITS TO THE HILLSBOROUGH FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP FUND

V2



Beck: string-driven virtuoso

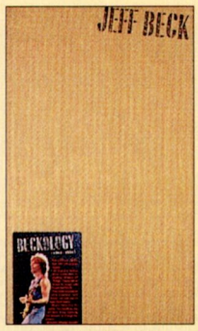
Redferns

The axe files

JEFF BECK
BECKOLOGY
Epic/Legacy ★★★

Reissued three-CD box set of legendary guitarist's extensive oeuvre

THIS is a comprehensive overview of Jeff Beck's career from the early Sixties pre-Yardbirds days to the end of the Eighties, complete with imitation guitar-case box and elucidatory booklet. The earliest recordings feature Beck's first professional band, The Tridents, performing competent but unimaginative imitations of their blues heroes, swiftly followed by a definitive selection of Beck-era Yardbirds tracks. These are attempts to bridge the gulf between the band's mid-Sixties pop aspirations and the blues purist ideals of their guitarist, with "Heart Full Of Soul", "Shapes Of Things" and "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago" standing out from the crowd.



Other material, including several BBC session tracks, are of strong historical interest. Beck's first solo recording and most famous hit, the irritatingly unforgettable "Hi Ho Silver Lining" is, of course, included, but of more interest is its Jimmy Page-penned B-side, "Beck's Bolero", featuring the never to be repeated line-up of Beck, Page, John Paul Jones and Keith Moon.

The original Jeff Beck Group of 1968, featuring Rod Stewart on vocals and Ron Wood on bass, unwittingly previewed the style of early Led Zeppelin, and, therefore, by default, the hordes of heavy metal monsters who materialised in their wake. However, weakness in the songwriting department relegates these recordings to the second division of late-Sixties heavy rock, while the Seventies incarnations of the band relied upon Beck's virtuoso playing and effects trickery to compensate for increasingly lacklustre material.

The most satisfying tracks date, surprisingly, from the mid-Seventies jazz/rock fusion albums, *Blow By Blow* and *Wired*, which found Beck in experimental territory.

After this period, however, things go down hill.

The 1985 drummerless album, *Flash*, was doomed to failure, and showed Beck floundering without the inspiration of a human rhythm section. Later contributions to the soundtracks of *Twins* and *Porky's Revenge* are little more than novelties, but "Big Block" and "Where Were You?" from '89's *Guitar Workshop* show much improvement.

Peter Huxley

SAGITTARIUS
PRESENT TENSE
Sundazed ★★★★★

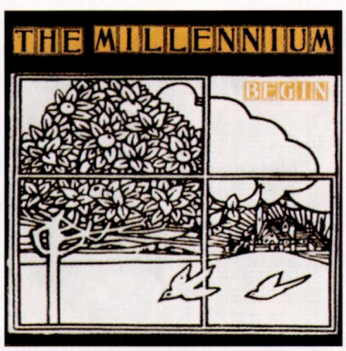
THE MILLENNIUM
BEGIN
Rev-Ola ★★★★★

Two gems of the baroque-pop genre unearthed at last

TO get the full scope of these groundbreaking recordings, released within weeks of each other in the summer of '68, it's vital to know that the protagonists, Gary Usher and Curt Boettcher, were not merely kindred spirits, rather they shared a quasi-mystical approach to songwriting and production that is rarely found today.

Present Tense was ostensibly Usher's brainchild. A Columbia staff producer who had previously knocked The Surfaris into ultra-swim shape, Usher had virtual carte blanche to experiment thanks to his track record with The Byrds, Simon And Garfunkel, Peanut Butter Conspiracy and Gene Clark. A close confidant and peer of Brian Wilson, Usher wanted to cast a similar light and shadow across his own album, but once he'd stumbled across the young genius of The Association's mentor, Boettcher, at a Beach Boys' session in late 1966, his star-crossed project became a collaboration.

Like Wilson and Phil Spector, Usher and Boettcher were perfectionists who



demanded a spiritual exactitude from their musicians in harmony, melody and rhythm, but they were also among the first people to use doubled-up eight-tracking, weird breaks and innovative sampling, either from effects or direct transcription of other artists. This anything-goes philosophy is what draws a modern audience back to ethereal nuggets like "My World Fell Down" (featuring Bruce Johnston and Glen Campbell), the tragically fraught "Musty Dusty" and "Would You Like To Go".

Heady musical vibrations and layered arrangements that slipped into focus like hallucinations were a given on both albums. The fortuitously named Millennium were even more unique in that they featured five singing, songwriting guitarists (including Michael Fennelly and Lee Mallory) who helped invent the entire power pop/cosmic Americana movements. In this regard, only The Sons of Champlin ran them close in the spooked psychedelic department, although Appletree Theatre, Rick Nelson and The Boylan Brothers were charting a similarly baroque course.

Begin is the definitive CD release since it gathers together the original album plus outtakes and single versions that might require several lifetimes to track down on vinyl. Again, Boettcher's ability to dismantle and reassemble structures gives the listener infinite possibilities for aural delight. You could write a manual about "To Claudia On A Thursday" alone, or you could simply lie back and let the cut-up sounds wash over your brain.

While the young producer, Keith Olsen, was ostensibly in charge of *Begin*, it's obvious that Boettcher couldn't let his group off the leash without maintaining an overall control.

The details and the whole are as unified as a love-in on the mind-expanding "Karmic Dream Sequence #1" (complete with the most delicate koto passages), while a sense of fun and adventure leaps out of "The Island", "The Know It All" and the jet-fuelled anti-Vietnam anthem, "It's You".

If you want to see how far pop music can go, then these two complimentary items are essential.

Max Bell

TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS
PRESSURE DROP – THE BEST OF TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS
Trojan ★★★★★

Peak moments from one of reggae's all-time greats

SHORTLY before his recent and abrupt departure from Island Records, Chris Blackwell told me he believed that, for a time, Toots Hibbert had been quite simply the greatest singer in the world. From the man who launched the international career of Bob Marley, such a claim has to be taken seriously.

This compilation comprises two dozen classic Jamaican sides, mostly produced by Leslie Kong before his death in 1971. Bearing out Blackwell's claim, Hibbert's vocal range is staggering, from the raw tough soul of "Funky Kingston" to the infectious joy of "Pressure Drop". His phrasing is as immaculate as Otis Redding's and he was an often inspired songwriter, particularly on "54-46 Was My Number", written while serving a year in prison for herbal misdemeanours in 1967. Hibbert readily adapted to every Jamaican style, fusing elements of R'n'B, mento, revival church, ska and, later, reggae. The results shimmer with the freshness of a sunrise in the Blue Mountains.

Jah lives, Toots shines.

Nigel Williamson

FREE BOOK!
worth £4.95

DEATH TO THE FOOTBALL BURGER!

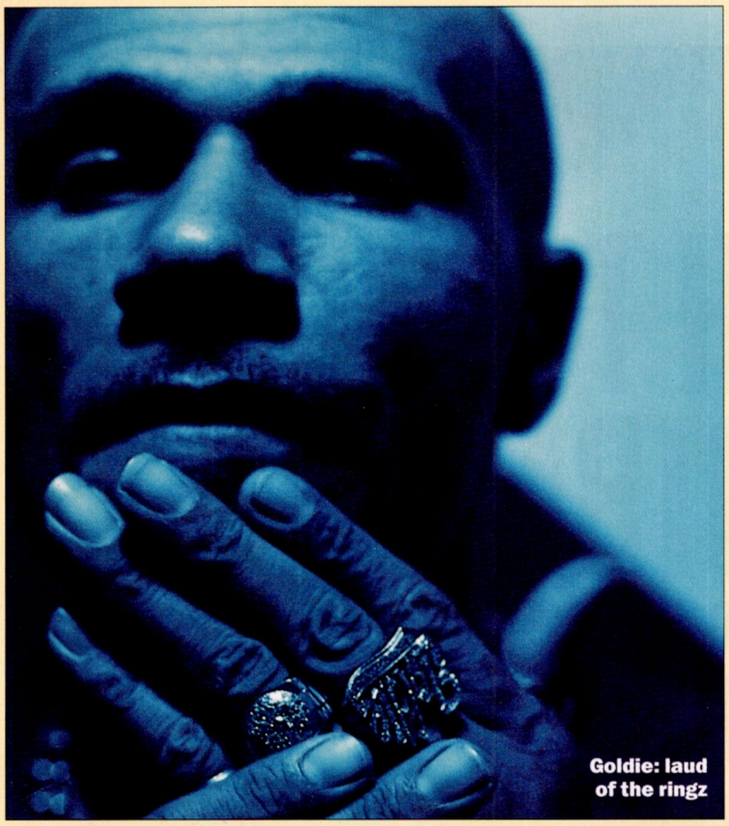
Goal is proud to present the very first **Colman's Football Food Guide** – from Liverpool to Lincoln City, the most comprehensive survey of grub at England's football grounds ever undertaken – and all of it absolutely **free with the next issue**

Order your copy now – it might just save your life (or at least your lower intestines)

PLUS: The 50 Greatest World Cup Goals
Exclusive interviews with Roy Keane and Roy Evans

goal

THE ESSENTIAL FOOTBALL MONTHLY ON SALE NOW



Goldie: laud of the ringz

Ingot we trust

GOLDIE
SATURNZ RETURN
ffrr ★★★

Jungle*meister*'s two-hour, double-CD follow-up to 1995's *Timeless*

MORE known for being a face (or rather a tooth) on the scene than for any output in his own right since *Timeless*, Goldie at last emerges with the follow-up that's turned into a comeback, what with all manner of studio delays and re-jiggings. It's still more recklessly ambitious than its predecessor. Goldie doesn't just not do things by halves, he doesn't do them by ones, judging by the sprawling *Saturnz Return*.

Remixed and remixed, the results are – well, mixed. "Temper Temper" blasts off the first CD, the Noel Gallagher collaboration, in which Gallagher continues his recent mood of strange atonement for Oasis' grey

pubbiness with an untamed squall of electric guitar over Goldie's breakbeats. The whole thing is obviously a wry nod to the pair's respective troubles under the media spotlight and sounds, inevitably, like the musical version of a scuffle. Not a flier.

Equally off is "Digital", another collaboration, this time with KRS-1 (is Goldie aware that Roni Size, who has usurped him as principal drum'n' bass auteur, has already used this title on *New Forms*?). Rap has a high turnover rate and KRS-1's been mouldering past his sell-by date for some years now, so it's hardly surprising that this rather subdued, reverential showcase for the "innovator in early rap poetry" doesn't light fires under your feet.

"I'll Be There For You" is better, an enjoyable enough gallop over the rhythmical hurdles, and "Dragonfly" is a pleasant digression into prog drum'n'bass, but we're looking for more than pleasant and enjoyable – we want the five-alarm ferocity of "Inner City Life". "Demonz" and "Chico – Death Of A Rock Star" are more menacing, as is "Fury – The Origin", though the latter rehashes the same sample as "This Is A Bad" from *Timeless*, which is a bit worrying. "Letter Of Fate", which, startlingly, features Goldie himself singing the words from a suicide note he once wrote, sounds – technically – strangely amateurish, surprising given all that studio time.

All is redeemed on the second CD with "Mother", which clocks in at just over an hour. Be warned. It's pretentious, it's overblown, it goes on way too long, it's pseudo-classical, it's superb. This is what Goldie is about. The beginning is reminiscent of "And The Gods Made Love" from Hendrix's *Electric Ladyland*, several minutes of thrashing, oceanic spray, which then slowly freezes into icy, gothic arches of white noise, consolidated by a 30-piece orchestra which keeps up an epic, breathing surge of strings *à la* Gorecki or Arvo Part. Goldie himself unleashes a primal howl of nostalgic remorse, Lennon's Plastic Ono Band scream re-enacted by a Nineties black British man who's gone through all the convulsive experiences a Nineties black British man can expect to have endured. This is signified by the protracted drum'n' bass turbulence the music hits, as screeching sheet layers of rhythm wrestle with the symphonic undertow before receding as the piece returns to the source, ending on the amorphous, slo-mo, emotive note on which it began.

If this "Mother" "fails", it's an essential failure. It's an excess, but, like the man said, you gotta say "Yes" . . .

David Stubbs

THE CHARLATANS
MELTING POT *Beggars Banquet*
★★★★★

Madchester survivors' Best Of

SADLY only missing their lissom debut, "Indian Rope", this is an otherwise admirable compilation, chronicling their evolution from (critically perceived) baggy also-rans to chart heavyweights. The early material – the urgent rush of "The Only One I Know", the stoned swirl of "Over Rising", the jittery "Weirdo", the relentless surge of "Sproston Green" – are all essentially groove-led, coasting along on funky Hammond riffs. It's only later, on their third album, *Up To Our Hips*, when a new maturity takes hold and they begin to write "proper" songs – "Can't Get Out Of Bed", "I Never Want An Easy Life . . . " (a psychedelic romp which could teach Noel Gallagher a thing or two about appropriating Beatles riffs), and the Stones-inspired "Just Lookin'" and "Just When You're Thinkin' Things Over".

What's evident is the utter charm of the songs, driven home by Burgess' little-brother voice and the late Rob Collins' consummate keyboard skills. With their latest album, *Tellin' Stories*, displaying their strongest and most consistent work to date (here, we get "One To Another" and "North Country Boy"), and marking the end of their relationship with Beggars Banquet – they're now on Geffen – this is a fitting end to Chapter One in the life of one of our most enduring bands.

Michael Bonner

VARIOUS ARTISTS
DECEPTIVE FIFTY *Deceptive* ★★★

Hits galore from pivotal indie label

THE 50th release from the highly successful Nineties indie label which began, like so many important contributions to late 20th century culture, as a bright idea in a pub. The Elastica album became its first Number One while its office still consisted of a chair and two phones.

This shows more individuality and flair than your grumpier side might expect. (Relatively) old breakthrough hits such as Elastica's "Stutter" and Gene's "Be My Light Be My Guide" are amusingly jostled by the perky Icelandic band Unun's "I See Red" and Idlewild's broody "Annihilate Now". Collapsed Lung seem to send up Elastica's "Connection", while Scarfo make a ham-fist of Elvis Costello's "I Want You". Snuff's stab at "Theme From *Whatever Happened To The Likely Lads*" should distract anyone from the winter chill. Wholly fun and even soulful in parts: deceptive, indeed.

Chris Roberts

KRISTIN HERSH
STRANGE ANGELS
4AD ★★★

Her first LP since Throwing Muses

KRISTIN's second solo LP is avowedly a more "self-assured" acoustic work. There's more dark humour than ever, proving that the amateur psycho-babble that normally accompanies reviews of her songs is largely inappropriate.

Co-produced by neighbour Joe Henry (no mean songwriter himself), it finds one woman and her guitar conjuring up hillbilly jigs, perversely anthemic choruses, and no shortage of kaleidoscopic lyricism. It'll make females chuckle (*"You bowl me over, and I'm not that drunk"*) and sensitive males depressed (*"Use me I get stronger, I get weaker when you treat me like a queen"*). Childhood memories of baseball fields and gazebo trees, not to mention *"gut pageants"* and *"rock candy brains"* abound. Funky, no; feverishly intelligent, yes.

Chris Roberts

UMAJETS
DEMOLOTION *Clearspot* ★★★★★

Fab power pop from an ex-Jellyfish

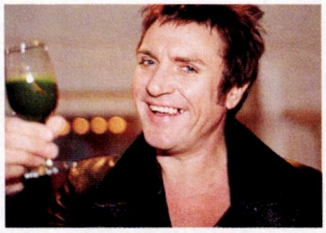
NAMED after a defaced photograph of Uma Thurman's naked anatomy, Umajets are Tim Smith from the *faux*-Seventies world of Jellyfish and Rob Aldridge of the former Creation Anglophiles, Hollyfaith. They have no grand, forward-looking manifesto. They exist for only one purpose: to create the most insanely uplifting music ever put on tape.

Let's not beat about the power pop bush: not since The Posies' *Frosting On The Beater* have two men harmonised with such soaring self-assertion. Right from the manner in which "Half Man Half Wrecking Ball" hugs your ears with swiftly shifting Raspberries' hooks, *Demolotion* will make you smile, chuckle and leap. And Umajets will make you sad, too (on "The Walls You Walk Through"), but only to make that next whipped cream tempo-change all the more delicious.

Goofy and sugary on top, but textured and deadly underneath, this is a record which will hold your attention for decades.

Gregory Boulevard

"When the band took off I shagged myself senseless."



On the road with Simon Le Bon in the March issue of

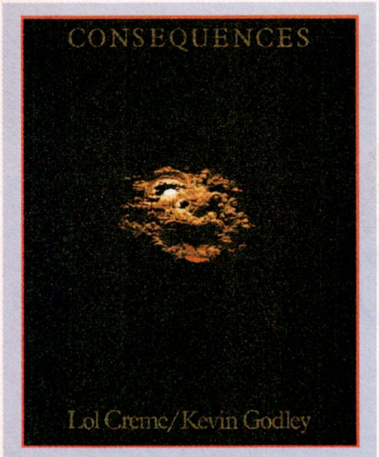
VOX

For pop stars with large cocks

Plus All Saints behind the scenes with the new pop sensations Divas 1998's leading ladies from Mary J Blige to Madonna Chumbawamba take America by the short and curlies Bob Dylan and The Rolling Stones Live! in New York The Bluetones slam back the tequilas Kristin Hersh life after Throwing Muses Catatonia wild and Welsh

ON SALE NOW!

More Rock! More Roll!



GODLEY AND CREME
Consequences
Mercury Con 017
Released **September 1977**
Produced by **Godley And Creme**
Written, arranged and performed by **Godley And Creme**
Dialogue written and performed by **Peter Cook**
Tracks: *Part One* – Seascape • Wind • Fireworks • Stampede • Burial Scene • Sleeping Earth • Honolulu Lulu • The Flood • *Part Two* – Five O'Clock In The Morning • When Things Go Wrong • Lost Weekend • Rosie • Office Chase • Cool Cool Cool • *Part Three* – Cool Cool Cool (Reprise) • Sailor • Mobilization • Please Please Please • Blint's Tune (Movements 1-17)

Corollary attack

Kit Aiken salutes Godley and Creme's lost masterpiece, *Consequences*

KEVIN Godley and Lol Creme were the edgier, brighter half of the astoundingly fertile smart-pop quartet that was 10cc, 1973-1976. They were film-obsessed hipster pasticheurs, artists with a capital Art but with tart humour, musicians as convincing with dense harmony and unpredictable melody as with unforgettable pop hooks. Ironic, wary of sentiment, super-sharp and ice-cool, Godley and Creme were the Coen brothers of rock. They invented the Gizmo, a device that clipped onto the bridge of an electric guitar, bowing the strings somehow, producing a range of unique sounds, some near-literal (strings, brass), others other-worldly. Kev and Lol got excited at the possibilities, left 10cc and conceived a triple concept album concerning "man's final struggle against an irate nature".

The Gizmo had already appeared on various 10cc tracks ("Old Wild Men", "How Dare You") but nothing so far had hinted at the sonic achievement that was "Part One" of *Consequences*. Using only the Gizmo, percussion, piano and voices, they created a daring sound picture, a dramatic, ingenious "movie for the ears" as Creme had it. It's one of the great lights-out-headphones-on recordings. The shimmering funfair calm of the opener, "Seascape", evolved with beautifully controlled foreboding into a backbeat from heaven which precedes a remarkable evocation of the absurdly scary "Wind". From there a stampede of wild animals jump-cuts to a disco and a burial, with the Gizmo simulating a tremulous soprano voice, a cascade of sparks from a firework, the brassy cry of an elephant and a dazzling range of soundscapes.

Even the slowish moments are always offset with something extraordinary. The "Sleeping Earth" segment (Godley snoring forever over a minimal vamp) is interrupted by apocalyptic string figures, and the eternal drip that starts "The Flood" germinates into an ingeniously complex rhythm part. The musical themes are, perhaps, gestural rather than melodic, which makes it an unorthodox listen for ears attuned to pop and rock (the most memorable tune is the central theme from the ornate "Honolulu Lulu", which is a straight pinch from the bridge of the Thirties standard, "Sentimental Journey"), but the dramatic texture and imagination of the piece is undeniable.

"Part Two" and half of "Part Three" is taken up with a comic playlet written and performed by Peter Cook interspersed with mostly fabulous, oblique songs. Divorce negotiations occur in a solicitor's office which is in the attic of the mysterious pianist, Mr Blint (sounding uncannily like EL Wisty). As the lawyers and clients get distracted by the minutiae of the settlement (Mr Hague, lawyer: "Mrs Stapleton's teeth seem to have been omitted from our list of assets." Mr Stapleton, client: "I don't want her teeth"), the weather outside is destroying the world. The symbolism and significant motifs (the number 17 is a teasingly recurrent idea) are vast red herrings and the play is far from a series of belly laughs. But Cook is brilliantly believable as four distinct characters, and the attention to detail of characterisation and incidental music along with the commentary of the songs means the dialogue bears many repeated listens, familiarity seeming only to strengthen the humour and the listener's involvement in this vivid, surreal scenario.

The pointless "Please Please Please" and plain silly "Mobilization" (the Army take on the elements) on Side Five are starting to sound suspiciously like filler but there are tremendous highlights: the hugely underrated pop crooner, Kevin Godley, duetting with jazz legend Sarah Vaughan on the heartbreaking "Lost Weekend", the portentous Jerry Goldsmith-esque (*Planet Of The Apes*) percussion during Mr Stapleton's Pinter-like anecdote about his attempt to buy some mince ("When I got home and opened it up, I found three twigs . . ."), the story of Blint's lost love, "Rosie", sounding like an excerpt from a bizarre Joan Littlewood musical, and the art-gospel, multi-thematic "Cool, Cool, Cool" with its stunningly elaborate vocal arrangement and its tantalising, stop-go rhythm design.

Side Six is "Blint's Tune Movements 1-17", the piano concerto that calms the storm and saves the world. It's here that the boys perhaps over-reach themselves. Moment to moment, it's impressive enough, with nods to Rachmaninov, Zappa and Gershwin, but Creme is no Rubinstein (Lol: "I dropped in every other note") and again one misses strong themes and a convincing aesthetic centre. It feels rather more of a sonic triumph than a musical one. However, in rock music, this kind of ambition, this creative grit, this range, this commitment to achieving the "difficult" and having the technical and musical chops to pull it off are qualities as rare as hens' teeth. And, in the end, as the tumult rages for the last time and eventually settles into a humming calm with the electronic twitter of a gull, you know you've experienced something amazing.

After 14 months work, in September, 1977, the two-hour-long *Consequences* was released in a handsome box featuring Godley and Creme's own artwork at the then record price of £11. It was marketed as Important Work to an appalled, puzzled industry and indifferent public at the height of punk, and was trashed by most critics as expensive, indulgent, long and dull, the antithesis of the times. It bombed. There were no hit singles, talk of all-star stage shows and West End musicals were dropped, the company developing the Gizmo eventually went bust, and the whole episode became faintly embarrassing history for all concerned.

Humbled, Godley and Creme pushed straight back into the studio to "make a proper album" (which became the wayward but brilliant *L*), but it wasn't until 1981 that they clawed back some commercial credibility with the hits, "Under Your Thumb" and "Wedding Bells" but, by then, they were thinking visual and had become celebrated music video industry innovators/whores. With music never again to be the only thing on their minds, the appallingly badly timed *Consequences* remains the outstanding, misunderstood musical legacy of extraordinarily gifted artists – and it still awaits a CD release in this country.

Now working separately, Godley and Creme are both video directors. Godley made "Zoo TV" for U2, the "Real Love" video for The Beatles and has written a film with Adrian Deevoy to be made this year. Creme directs commercials, has his own digital art company in LA and is currently collaborating with Paul Morley, Trevor Horn and Anne Dudley on a "drum'n'bass-meets-Debussy" Art Of Noise project.

There is a website (Mr Blint's Attic) dedicated to Consequences at www.geocities.com/Paris/9992/17.html

Adrian Boot

INSIDE TRACK
Lol Creme and **Kevin Godley**

You had to leave 10cc to do *Consequences*.

LOL: It was hard for Eric (Stewart) and Graham (Gouldman), but we had other things to do.

KEV: The band wasn't democratic enough to allow us the freedom. Had we been allowed to get it out of our system, who knows what would have happened?

How did it inflate into this gargantuan project?

LOL: It brought so many latent ideas to the fore, because we could make all these noises without hiring an orchestra. I was always interested in composition, orchestration. And, once we started, it grew like some festering disease. Unstoppable.

KEV: There were so many ideas waiting to come out, they came out indiscriminately. This is the work of two very stoned people whose eyes were on a mass of details, hoping that the whole would be worth more than the sum of its parts.

It was painstakingly recorded.

LOL: Very slow. We were loop crazy – there's a huge flightcase chock-a-bloc with quarter-inch tape loops we created for *Consequences* with these crazy names – "Roman Legion In The Bullrushes"! In those days, the simple act of editing was major. I remember laying out the tape on the floor, chopping it up with a razor blade and sticking it back together in any order we felt like. Now it's three clicks on the mouse. But it was fun.

What are your memories of working with Peter Cook?

LOL: It was a total privilege, a gas. A wild time, a wonderfully creative fun time. He moved in with us at The Manor studios, lock, stock and barrel for three months. He wrote it, recorded it that night, and the next day wrote more.

How did you feel when you realised that the industry were going to be puzzled, the media hostile and the public indifferent?

LOL: Kevin was heartbroken, I don't think he's got over it yet. He was really, really upset. I didn't give a shit. And I never have.

KEV: Shit, we waited too long to do it. Art has its value for the moment. Had we had the freedom to do it earlier, maybe it would have had some real value.

What do you think of it now?

LOL: I haven't listened to it in 20 years. I've heard brief snatches. We played "The Flood" not long ago and it sounded terrific.

KEV: There's some sparkling bits in it. Side one works very well, there's a couple of good songs. In all probability it disappeared up its own, very stoned, arse. But I don't regret it for a minute.

Does it bother you that it never got a CD release?

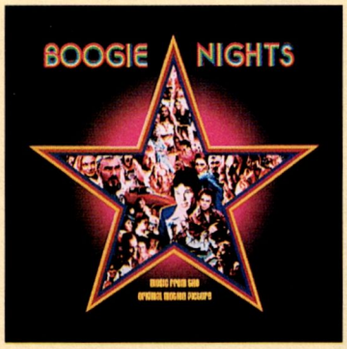
LOL: The important thing is to have been involved in doing the bloody thing. It never occurred to me. I'm just thrilled I got to do it.

KEV: It would be interesting to see how people react to it today. I think some of the best art is about what's going on in the world, rather than just what's going on in your head. And the best rock music is about a connection of both aspects. And the worst of it is the drivel that just comes out of people's heads.

Pennie Smith

Lol Creme and Kevin Godley: the Coen brothers of rock

Boogie Nights: sounds to whip your togs off to



DOESN'T take much to make me happy, but The Emotions' 1977 hit, "Best Of My Love", gets me there quicker than most.

As the opening track on **BOOGIE NIGHTS** *(Capitol)* ★★★★, it's almost enough to make you believe the critics when they tell you a film starring Mark "Fear" Wahlberg and Burt "Striptease" Reynolds is in any way, shape or form, "good". So flip and funky is The Emotions' one moment of EW&F-inspired magic that the soundtrack album to the porn'n'scorn saga is on a roll before you can claim to have a Dirk Diggler donger.

Marvin Gaye's "Got To Give It Up" and The Commodores' "Machine Gun" (so hot a dance cut that even that notorious groove-free zone, Lionel Richie, twigged it'd be foolish to sing over it) continue the flow. Eric Burdon lends a weathered grizzle to the War tune, "Spill The Wine", while McFadden & Whitehead's chestnut, "Ain't No Stopping Us Now", sounds peculiar, chiefly because it's the original and not one of the five thousand, two hundred and forty seven extant cover versions.

By means of light relief, Melanie turns her "Brand New Key", and there's an utterly horrendous airbrushed AOR ballad from somebody called Night Ranger.

The climax (arf!) consists of the highly credible and Official Wizened Old Hacks' Greatest Record Ever, "God Only Knows" by The Beach Boys. And ELO's "Livin' Thing", which is very uncool indeed, great fun, and liked only by people who don't smoke the same cigarettes as the school bully. Needless to say the derivative, shallow, inauthentic ELO track is by far the more entertaining.

Boogie Nights also includes "Feel The Heat", a "demo" by actors Wahlberg and John C Reilly, which isn't intentionally comical. Especially at its demise, when, in a fit of stoned, would-be muso bonding, they mutter sincerely to each other, "Yeah man, that's good."

Wicked satire and glitterball abandon: a potent combination, and sufficient to persuade anyone to whip their togs off in a hurry. One grouse, though: why no Heatwave? OK, so Heatwave were never actually any good or anything, but if you're going to nick their best title you may as well use their least lame song . . .

On a more mature and earnest plane, one can chill out with **THE ICE STORM** *(Velvet/Reelsounds)* ★★★★. This, as I no doubt propose elsewhere in this issue, is one of the strongest films made in recent years, and a wonderfully dry look at loss and longing.

The soundtrack's curious in that it doesn't glibly echo the movie's early Seventies setting, as would've been quite straightforward (and more commercial), but makes a genuine attempt to support the film's idiosyncratic emotional pull. Mychael Danna's instrumental contributions are precise and fine; then there's an eclectic exercising of choice. Free's "Mr Big" and Traffic's "Light Up Or Leave Me Alone" are trad rock, as is, to be frank, Zappa's "Dirty Love", but Bobby Bloom's "Montego Bay" is what passed for pop-soul at the time. Harry Nilsson's "Coconut" and Jim Croce's "I've Got A Name" constitute two lovely songs by dead people, and somebody called Sammi Smith does a mellow kind of justice to "Help Me Make It Through The Night".

However, the stand-out is David Bowie's acoustic reworking of "I Can't Read". If I (or any Bowie fan) tell you this was always the best Tin Machine song by a mile-and-a-half, you might not be all that overwhelmed, the competition being none too sparky. Yet it was always unbearably moving, perhaps the more so, being a jewel among jism.

The chorus of *"I can't read shit any more"* sounds increasingly like *"I can't reach it any more"*. Pretty deep and symbolic, huh?

This pared-down version is nothing short of beautiful. "One of my personal favourites", Bowie has said. "I had the chance to align the mood more toward *The Ice Storm*'s tragic gathering momentum." Director Ang Lee has gushed, "It captures the essence of the film, about the longing to remember and the certainty that there's always something in our past that no film, song or book will ever capture."

Much is captured by the Channel 4 *Silents* series, and the man who composed the score for the five-hour *Napoleon*, Carl Davis, has twirled his baton again for **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA** *(Silva Screen)* ★★★. Dabbling with the Faust opera but bringing in trumpet and organ flourishes of his own, Davis gives Lon Chaney plenty to posthumously act weird to.

Davis has recently been collaborating with Paul McCartney on his *Liverpool Oratorio*, and this *Phantom* is more pop

than you'd anticipate. Sarah Brightman, rest assured, has nothing to do with it.

NOSFERATU *(Silva Screen)* ★★★, also employs The City Of Prague Philharmonic. The music's by James Bernard, who scored most of the old Hammer productions, including *Dracula*, *The Hound Of The Baskervilles*, and *The Devil Rides Out*. Nic Raine, who's often worked with John Barry (not to mention orchestrating the *Wallace And Gromit* films) conducts.

Next up is **THE BIG SCORE** *(EMI)* ★★★★★, if I may be allowed one more blitz of now-voguish Blaxploitation. Like the recent *Bad Mutha's (reviewed last month)*, this taps the Seventies' most rehabilitated genre for some

stunning, soulful and sexy, big bad music. The name's a nod to *Shaft's Big Score*, represented here by Lou Rawls. Isaac Hayes is, of course, present, and both Johnny Pate and The Four Tops are drawn from *Shaft In Africa*. From *Trouble Man*, Marvin glides through "T Plays It Cool" (the rhythms eerily prescient of today's "happening" jungle sound). Floating into and around Curtis Mayfield's "Superfly" and "Freddie's Dead", Quincy Jones' "Call Me Mister Tibbs", Joe Simon's exceedingly hunky "Theme From Cleopatra Jones' and Willie Hutch's "Brothers Gonna Work It Out", this proudly erect compilation is a very special dream of magic.

It'll keep Tarantino in highly original ideas all of his very own for the rest of the century.

Not so much drop-dead cool as worth-the-hassle-of-staying-alive cool, *The Big Score* isn't afraid to venture beyond the carved-in-stone canon, either. Barry White's "Theme From Together Brother" is here, as is Edwin Starr's "Easin' In". Both are loud and proud whether they're hip or not.

So is Rose Royce's impossibly buoyant and optimistic "Car Wash", which is, spiritually, where we came in.

Let me tell ya, it's better than digging a ditch . . .

Chris Roberts

UNCUT CLASSIFIED

TEL 0171 261 2886
FAX 0171 261 6579

RECORDS AND CD'S FOR SALE

15 High Bridge Newcastle Tyne & Wear
NE1 1EW Tel or Fax 0191 2614741
Last month's offer still available
Credit card sales Same day despatch

COMPACT DISCS

JOY DIVISION - Heart & Soul (4 CD box includes unreleased) £29.99
AC/DC - Bonfire 5 CD box (includes unreleased) £47.99
CROSBY/NASH - Another Stoney Evening Live L.A. 10/10/71 ..... £14.99
VARIOUS - No Nukes - 2 CD Live '79 (CSN, Springsteen, Browne etc) £23.99
DEEP PURPLE - Made in Japan (remastered +2 unrel. trax) £8.49
BEN FOLDS FIVE - Naked Baby Photos (rare/unreleased) £11.99
PETER CASE - Full Service, No Waiting (new) £12.99
MARK EITZER - Caught In A Trap... (new) £11.99
FREAKWATER - Springtime (new) £11.99
TALKING HEADS - 77, More Songs, Fear of Music, Remain In Light, Speaking In Tongues, Naked, Little Creatures, Stop Making Sense, True Stories ..... £7.99 each
BOB WELCH - French Kiss/Three Hearts 1978/79 ..... £11.49
ALBERT LEE - Speechless £11.49
NEIL YOUNG + VARIOUS - Bridge School Acoustic Concerts £11.99
DONOVAN - Essence To Essence £6.99, HMS Donovan £10.99
LED ZEPPELIN - I, II, III, IV, Houses Of The Holy, Presence In Through The Outdoor, Coda (Remastered) ..... £7.99 each
LED ZEPPELIN - BBC Sessions 2 CD's (1969-71) £14.99
LED ZEPPELIN - Physical Graffiti 2 CD £12.99
HIGH LLAMAS - Cold And Bouncy (new) £11.99
HIGH LLAMAS - Santa Barbara, Gideon Gaye, Hawaii ..... £11.99 each
SPLITENZ - Oddz & Enz 6 CD box of 70's Recordings £47.99
SPLITENZ - Rear Enz 6 CD box of 80's Recordings £47.99
PETER KOPPES - Irony (new) £14.99
GRATEFUL DEAD - From The Vaults Vol 3 ..... Phone!
BILL KREUTZMAN - Backbone (new) £14.99
BOB WEIR/ROB WASSERMAN - Weir/Wasserman Live! £14.99
DAVID LETTERMANS LATE SHOW - Includes unreleased tracks by REM, Patti Smith, Jerry Garcia etc £14.99
OLD AND IN THE WAY - Breakdown, 18 previously unreleased recordings featuring Jerry Garcia (1973) £12.99
GRATEFUL DEAD - Dicks Picks Vol 9 (16.9.90 Mad.sq.gdns) 3CD £15.99
GRATEFUL DEAD - Good Morning Little Schoolgirl 2 CD filmore E. 2.11.69 £15.99
ZABRISKIE POINT - 2 CD set includes 30 mins of unrel Garcia £19.99
GRATEFUL DEAD - Dix Pix 2 £10.99, Dix Pix 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 £15.99 each
ELECTRIC PRUNES - Complete singles (18 trax) £12.99
ELECTRIC PRUNES - Live Stockholm (Dec 14 1967) £12.99
NICK DRAKE - Fruit Tree 4 CD Box (complete recordings) £34.99
BOB DYLAN - Biograph 3CD's, Bootleg series 3 CD's ..... £17.99 each
SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS - 84 trax in 6CD box set £67.99
WEATHER REPORT - Live in Tokyo 2 CD live 1972 ..... £11.99
ZOMBIES - Zombie heaven - 4 CD box set + 64 page book £37.99
BEACH BOYS - Pet Sounds Sessions 4 CD box set £39.99
WISHBONE ASH - Distillation (4 CD box of rarities) £36.99
PIXIES - Bossa Nova, Come on Pilgrim, Surfa Rosa, Doolittle, Troupe Le More (all new to mid price) ..... £8.49 each
PIXIES - Death To The Pixies (2 CD's includs live disk) £17.99
JERRY GARCIA/MERL SAUNDERS - Blue From The Rainforest £14.99
MERL SAUNDERS - Fiesta Amazonica (feat Garcia, Weir) £14.99
CREAM - Fresh Cream, Disraeli Gears, Goodbye, Live Vol 1, Live Vol 2 (all remastered) ..... £7.99 each
CREAM - Wheels Of Fire (2CD remastered) £11.99
THE WHO - Odds and Sods (remastered + unreleased) £7.99
T-REX - BBC Recordings 2CD 1970-76 ..... £12.99
STONE THE CROWS - BBC Live 1971-72 ..... £949
JEFFERSON AIRPLANE - Crown Of Creation (remastered) £13.99
JEFFERSON AIRPLANE - Volunteers (remastered) £13.99
RONNIE LANE + SLIM CHANCE – Any more for Anymore (remastered + bonus tracks) £12.49
THE VERVE – N come Down (B sides and rareties £12.99
THE VERVE – Verve EP £7.99

Make cheques/postal orders payable to SPIN COMPACT DISCS (UN)
P&P 50p for first disc, 20p thereafter, £2.00 for first boxed set, £1.00 thereafter.
Europe 2 x rate - R.O.W. 4 x rate. Open 10am-5.30 Mon-Sat
Visit our web site http://www.pfoot.demon.co.uk/spin/spin.html

MUZE MAIL ORDER

3 PRINCESS PARADE, BURY, BL9 0QL
Tel/Fax: 0161 764 3013

BUDGIE - Best of CD £5.99
CLANCY BROS & TOMMY MAKEM - Wrap the Green Flag CD £6.99
EDGAR FROESE - Ages CD £8.99
GROUNDHOGS - Best of (Liberty/UA years) CD £5.99
MICHEAL NESMITH - Listen to the Band (RCA Material) CD £5.99
PRETTY THINGS - Whiter Shade of Dirty Water CD £12.99
ROBINSON CRUSOE - 60's TV Series Soundtrack CD £8.99
VIVIAN STANSHALL - Sir Henry AT Rawlinson End CD £7.99
STEELEYE SPAN - A Stack Of CD £2.99
TOMITA - Different Dimensions (Best of) CD £5.99

UK postage £1 first + 25p each extra (EEC x 2, ROW x 3).
Visa/Mastercard accepted. Cheques/POs payable to *MUZE*.

FOR SALE

Badlands mail order

Dept UN, 11 St. George's Place, Cheltenham, GL50 3LA.
credit card hot-line 01242 227724 9am to 6pm
Fax: 01242 227393 E.Mail Badlands@cityscape.co.uk

AC/DC - Bonfire, superb 4CD box set, loads of unreleased tracks ..... CD £44.99
AIR - Moon Safari, new experimental French dance album ..... CD £12.99
Allman Bros Band - Mycology, The Best Of The Epic Years, out soon ..... CD Ephone
Ash - New album due in April ..... CD Ephone
Belle & Sebastian - Modern Rock Song single ..... CD £2.99
Big Country - Kings Of Emotion, rarities & live anthology double CD ..... CD £9.99
Bluetones - Return To The Last Chance Saloon ..... CD £12.99
Bob Dylan - Masterpieces, superb Aussie triple at bargain price while stocks last ..... CD £14.99
Bob Dylan - Send your details to join our exclusive Dylan mailing list ..... Mailing List
Bob Dylan - Time Out Of Mind, vinyl out now ..... LP £12.99
Brian Wilson, with Carnie & Wendy - The Wilsons, available on import ..... CD £16.99
Bruce Springsteen - One Step Up, 2CD tribute to "The Boss" and his songs ..... CD £24.99
Carole King - The Ode Collection, 2CD anthology ..... CD Ephone
Charlatans - Melting Pot, Hits Rarities and new tracks ..... CD £12.99
Charlatans - Tellin' Stories, essential from 1997 cheap while stocks last ..... CD £9.99
Deep Purple - In Japan, 25th Anniversary remastered DBL vinyl limited & purple ..... LP £14.99
Deep Purple - In Japan, 25th Anniversary remastered DBL with bonus tracks ..... CD £8.99
DJ Shadow - Pre Emptive Strike, new rarities out in Feb ..... CD £12.99
Dusty Springfield - Everything Coming Up Dusty, remastered with 8 bonus trax ..... CD £8.99
Embrace - Debut album due out soon ..... CD Ephone
Fall - Peel Sessions Vol 1 with sleeve by John Peel ..... CD £11.99
Goldie - Saturn Returns, features Noel Gallagher & symphonic piece ..... CD Ephone
Guy Chadwick - Lazy, Soft & Slow, fantastic new album from House Of Love man ..... CD £12.99
Hazeldine - How Bees Fly, superb new US album, very Wilco very Son Volt ..... CD £12.99
Hole - Celebrity Skin, Brand new studio album with Billy Corgan due out March '98 ..... CD £12.99
Ian Brown - Unfinished Monkey Business, from former Stone Roses frontman ..... CD £12.99
Jam - Direction, Reaction, Creation. Bargain price while stocks last ..... CD £29.99
Jeff Buckley - Last Goodbye. Aussie import incl "Kangaroo" ..... CD £6.99
Jeff Buckley - Live At Sinc E, Grace EP, Eternal Life, So Real, all singles each ..... CD £6.99
Jeff Buckley - My Sweatheart The Drunk ..... CD £12.99
Jimmy Webb Tribute - Someone Left The Cake Out. Various artists cover versions ..... CD £12.99
John Fogerty - Walking In A Hurricane Australian CD single + 2 unrel tracks ..... CD £6.99
Joy Division - Heart & Soul Box Set, amazing price while stocks last ..... CD £29.99
Kinks - Kinks, Kinda Kinks, Kontroversy, Face 2 Face, Something Else
Kinks - Remastered reissues inc bonus tracks and sleeve notes by Ray Davies each ..... CD Ephone
Kristen Hersh - Strange Angels ..... CD £12.99
Madonna - Ray O' Light, brand new album ..... CD £12.99
Marion - The Program, incl Johnny Marr ..... CD £12.99
Mark Eitzel - Caught in a Trap, brand new album ..... CD £12.99
Mark Hollis - Mark Hollis, amazing new album out now ..... CD £12.99
Matchbox 20 - Yourself Or Someone Like You, Much hyped US rock outfit ..... CD £12.99
Morrissey - Viva Hate, 25th Anniversary Issue at stunning price ..... CD £6.99
Move - Movements, 3CD box set inc unreleased tracks ..... CD £19.99
Nick Cave - Best Of, features exclusive tracks out in March ..... CD £12.99
Nick Heyward - The Apple Bed ..... CD £12.99
Nick Lowe - Dig My Mood ..... CD £11.99
Nils Lofgren - Cry Tough, I Came To Dance, remastered at mid price, each ..... CD £8.99
Nils Lofgren & Grin - 1 plus 1, low price Sony Rewind reissue ..... CD £7.99
Page & Plant - Most High brand new 12 track album ..... CD £12.99
Pearl Jam - Yield, brand new album out in February ..... CD £12.99
Propellerheads - Decks, Drums & Rock n Roll ..... CD £12.99
REM - In The Attic, superb collection of rare IRS B sides import out now ..... CD £16.99
Ronnie Lane - Anyone For Anymore, reissue double CD with out takes ..... CD £13.99
Scott Walker - Looking Back With, 14 track album featuring early rarities ..... CD £12.99
Sensational Alex Harvey Band - 14 track best of ..... CD £6.99
Sensational Alex Harvey Band - Last Of The Teenage Idols, BBC sessions ..... CD £13.99
Sensational Alex Harvey Band - Vambo Rool, Live in Concert ..... CD £13.99
Simple Minds - Neapolis, new album for new label ..... CD £12.99
Space - Tin Planet eagerly anticipated second album ..... CD £12.99
Spiritualized - Live album out in March. Please phone ..... CD Ephone
Split Enz - Spellbound, 2CD 40 track remastered anthology on import. Essential ..... CD £13.99
Squeeze - Six Of One, 6CD box set inc 1st 6 albums, unrel tracks, book etc ..... CD £44.99
Steve Earle - Early Tracks, remastered with 4 bonus tracks ..... CD £12.99
Steve Marriot - All Or Nothing Live, new live set from late 70's on rec ..... CD £12.99
T Rex - BBC Sessions, new definitive double far surpassing Windsong release ..... CD £13.99
T Rex - T Rex EP, 7 track single contains first 4 singles in rare & unheard versions ..... CD £6.99
Tears for Fears - Big Chair, Hurting, Seeds Of Love remastered with bonus tracks ..... CD £8.99
Terry Callier - Time Peace, folk sinbger/songwriter has worked with Beth Orton ..... CD £12.99
The Verve - Old singles, inc Bitter Sweet Sym, and other delected titles ..... each CD £3.99
The Who - Odds and Sods, remastered, loads of extra new tracks ..... CD £8.99
Van Halen - III, Brand new studio album out in February ..... CD £12.99
Walker Brothers - Images, Portrait, Take It Easy, remasters, extra tracks ..... CD £8.99
Wishbone Ash - Distillation, Fantastic 4CD Box Set spanning all albums plus bonus tracks CD £35.99
Yes - BBC Sessions 69/70, definitive 2CD set out soon Please phone ..... CD £13.99
Yes - Keys to Ascension, the VIDEO, now remastered and flawless ..... VID Ephone

Pay by credit card, switch, cheque or P.O. UK post £1 for 1st item, 50p each extra
Europe double. R.O.W. triple. Same day despatch. Mail Order Specialists since 1986

FOR SALE

PHOTO I.D.

Phoney photo I.D. cards are now available and we've got 23 different designs for you. Join the "world famous Actors Guild", or even the Mile High Club, become a Bodyguard, Student I.D., Personal I.D., Press Cards, and there's loads more to choose from.

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY AND DESIGNS. TAMPERPROOF, LAMINATED FINISH. CREDIT CARD SIZE.

Visit our web site at; www.belvine.co.uk
FOR A FREE CATALOGUE SEND S.A.E. TO:
BELVINE (DEPT UN)
P.O. BOX 180
STANMORE, MIDDX. HA7 2AZ
All items are sold as novelties and misuse may be illegal

TRAVEL, WORK AND PARTY AROUND THE WORLD

A travel bible that will save you time, money and hassle!
It's never been cheaper or easier to travel the World - but it's never been more difficult to work. Immigration officials world-wide **insist** that you be **strictly** a tourist - not a worker. This book will show you how to avoid this situation, so you can work as a local **with** or **without** a work permit.

- **Reveals** how to get a social Security Card in the USA.
- A Social Insurance Number in Canada.
- A Tax File Number in Australia - An Inland Revenue Number in New Zealand.
- You must have these bureaucratic cards to work.
- The author has obtained all of these and will show how **you** can do the same. Also
- How to work in Thailand, Israel, Greece, Hong Kong and many more countries.
- Also how to avoid the attention of immigration officials and 'con artists.'
- Tips for **single women** working and travelling alone and many, many more valuable tips and advice

WARNING do not carry this book through immigration channels. If caught, you will not gain entry to the USA, Canada, Australia or N.Z. **Price only £9.95 includes P&P.**

Or send a 26p S.A.E. for a free catalogue containing 44 world travel, employment related guides MONEY BACK GUARANTEE. Return book within 28 days for a full refund, if not satisfied. To order: send your name, address, with cheque/PO to:

Lloyd Books, P.O. Box 68 (UN) Melton Mowbray LE13 OZE

PLEASE MENTION
UNCUT
WHEN REPLYING TO ADVERTISEMENT

WORLD FAMOUS VINTAGE & RARE GUITARS

68 - 70 Kenway Road , London, England SW5 ORA
Tel: 0171 370 7835/6828 Fax : 0171 373 0441

GIBSON GUITARS
1973 Black LP Custom, Great Player: £1350
1971 LP Custom Cherry Sunburst: £1150
1976 Wine Red LP Custom, Good Player: £950
1993 Black LP Standard As New: £995
1977 Sunburst LP Deluxe, with Humbuckers: £850
1957 LP Gold Top, as featured on cover of "The Les Paul Book' (Tony Bacon/P. Day), Great Player: £10,000
SG Standard, Ebony Board, White: £895
Selection of Firebirds from £995
1964 ES330, 100%, Nickel Parts, Nice Guitar: £1650
1985 Ivory Custom Shop 335, 1/2 List Price: £1595
1978 Blonde 335, Virtually Mint 100%: £1695
1962 Cherry 335, Seymour Duncan Pafs: £2100
1968 Tobacco 345, 100% Straight & Clean: £1850
1978 Cherry ES345, Good Clean Guitar: £1850
1971 ES345, Cherry, Trapeze T/P, Mint: £2000
ACOUSTIC GUITARS
1973 Cherry S/B Hummingbird: £1100
1969 Blonde Top Dove: £1650
1966 Cherry S/B J45: £1500
1968 Country & Western, Very Clean: £1650
1967 S/B J200, 100% Clean, Thin Neck: £3250
1959 Country & Western, Crazed Top: £1695
1964 LG1, Very Clean, Good Affordable Sixties Gibson: £850
1940's LG2 Banner Headstock, Big Sound, Very Clean: £1895
1970 D35 Style, Employee Model, Extra Inlays, & Brazilian Rosewood Backstrip: £1800
1971 D18, Sounds Like a Fifties Model: £1350
1970 D18, Nice Player & Sound: £1195
1994 DIR, Good Martin Starter: £895
1979 D35, Good Overall Condition: £1250
1971 0018: £1650
1942 0017, Excellent Condition: £1500
Many More Gibson & Martins in Stock: Please Call
BASSES
New Custom Shop, Custom Colour Relic Jazz Basses, Shoreline Gold/Seafoam Green, All Docs & Tags: £Please Call
1964 L Series Precision, Very Clean, Good Player: £2000
1977 Short Scale, Orig, Blonde Musicmaster Bass: £550
1965 Fender Precision, White Refin: £1450
1969 Candy Apple Red Precision: £1750
1973 M/N & R/N S/B Precisions: £895
1967 Epiphone Rivoli, Burgundy Sparkle, Excellent+: £950
1965 S/B Precision, Very, Very Clean: Please Call
1956 Original Precision Bass, Rare!!! £Please Call
FENDER GUITARS
1955 Two Tone Strat Original Finish All Bakelite Parts In Original Tweed Centre Pocket Case, One Piece Ash Body, This Is A Great Guitar: £10,500
1963 Sonic Blue Strat 100% Original, Exceptionally Rare, All Parts Like New In Original White Tolex Case, Even Has Original 1963 Fender Catalogue: £Please Call
1964 Candy Apple Red Strat, This Guitar Is So Clean It Is A Joke! Comes With Original Strap And Hanging Tags: £12,500
1965 Candy Apple Red Strat, Again A Super Clean 100% Original Guitar Has To Be Seen: £8500
1962 Sunburst Strat Spaghetti Logo, Original Finish And Parts, Totally Stock Guitar: £6350
1996 S/B Custom Shop Strat: £1350
1973 L/H Sunburst Strat: £1350
1976 Blonde Telecaster, Players Guitar: £950
1952 Reissue Bronze Custom Shop Tele: £950
1973 L/H Blonde Telecaster, Nice Player: £1475
1973 Factory Black T/Line Tele: £1350
11997 Custom Shop Champagne Sparkle Tele: £1250

WHOLESALE VINTAGE & RARE
1966 ES330, Restored To Original Black P90 PickUps: £795
1967 ES330 Burgundy Sparkle 2X P90 Changed Tuners: £950
1964 ES300 Original S/B, Changed Tuners: £850
1975 Fender Tele Custom Natural: £895
1972 Fender Tele Blonde Cool Looking: £895
1990 Fender Tele USA Standard: £395
1978 Original Red Telecaster: £695
1990 Fender USA Tele Metallic, Purple: £455
1989: Fender Strat Plus: £450
1977 Fender Strat Black, Big Headstock: £650
1985 Fender Custom Shop 62 Reissue Burgundy Mist, Factory Gold Hardware: £950
1994 Special Edition See Through Blonde Strat: £575
Fender Jazz Bass, A Bitzer 1960's Pickups & Hardware: £675
1955 Gibson CF100 Acoustic: £1000
1976 Wine Red Les Paul Custom: £850
1973 Black SG Standard, Very Clean: £675
Marshall Master Model & Super Lead 100W heads From: £300

Please call Chris Trigg or Steve Robinson for Amps , Effects or any other inquiries. Thank You.

Amistad: a triumph for humanity

Andrew Cooper

Amistad

Directed by **Steven Spielberg**
Produced by **Steven Spielberg, Debbie Allen, Colin Wilson**
Screenplay **David Franzoni** Director of Photography **Janusz Kaminski**
Editor **Michael Kahn** Music **John Williams**

Starring **Morgan Freeman, Matthew McConaughey, Anthony Hopkins, Djimon Hounsou**
Opens **February 27**, Cert **tbc**, 155 mins
★★★★★

THE only person with the combination of clout, resourcefulness, integrity and brazenness to have made a film in Hollywood about the Holocaust is Steven Spielberg. Now comes *Amistad*, in which, once again, Spielberg has succeeded in bringing one of the most tragic and unrelieved episodes in history – the slave trade – to the mainstream screen, by picking out one of those very rare stories of triumph for humanity in what was otherwise a seemingly bottomless pit of human misery.

Set in 1839, *Amistad* tells the story of 53 Africans held captive on board a Spanish slave ship who manage to break free and overpower their captors. They order the two surviving crew members to navigate them back to their African homeland, but being tricked by them, sail aimlessly up the Eastern seaboard for weeks, only to be captured by an American naval ship and brought to trial for the murder of the crew.

Well-meaning abolitionists take up the Africans' cause and a young real estate attorney, Roger Baldwin (McConaughey), explores the question of whether the men are actually slaves as they may have been abducted illegally. The case becomes a political hot potato, dividing North and South in a rumbling prefiguration of the Civil War to come, with re-election-seeking President Van Buren (Nigel Hawthorne) willing to appease the young Queen Isabella of Spain by fixing judge and jury to find against the Africans. Enter former President John Quincy Adams (Hopkins), whose ancient abolitionist sentiments are reawoken as he takes the case to the Supreme Court.

The opening of *Amistad* is authentically, unsparingly horrific as, through a flickering, fast-moving play of half-light, the Africans turn on the Amistad's crew with machetes and blood-spurting desperation. From here on in, we see things from the Africans' point of view, most tellingly in one hauntingly surreal scene in which, in charge but not in control of the Amistad, the Africans drift barely feet from an American vessel occupied by a party of well-heeled diners regaled by a string quartet.

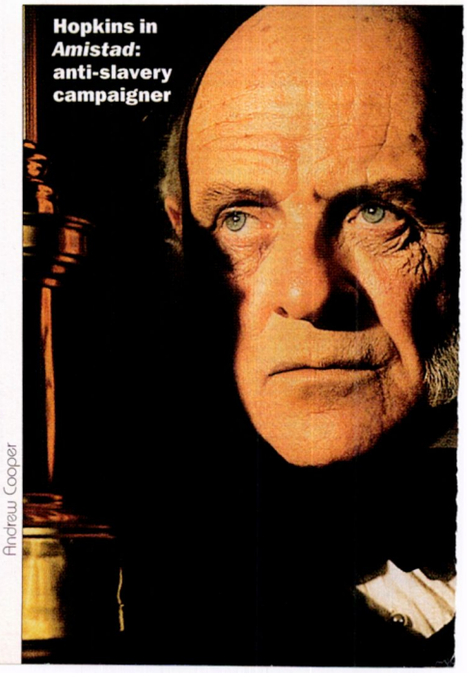
movie of the month

Eventually, one Cinque emerges as the Africans' leader, the point of contact between attorney Baldwin and his own people, once a translator has been found. Cinque is played by Djimon Hounsou, a newcomer to movies whose previous screen experience has been confined largely to Madonna and Paula Abdul videos. But he's superb, having to carry a role that requires him to convey humanity and the "otherness" of one angry and bewildered in an alien land, and to be a paragon of black pride, while avoiding ebony-carved clichés of passive "negritude" to which, even today, white depictions of Africans can too easily fall prey. It was a masterstroke to give this key role to an obscure actor, as opposed to, say, a Denzel Washington who would bring too much Hollywood baggage to the part.

The movie has its faults and points of controversy. It doesn't flinch from pointing out black complicity in the slave trade, which has angered some. It almost didn't appear at all, after author Barbara Chase-Riboud demanded an injunction, claiming *Amistad* plagiarised her 1988 book, *Echo Of Lions*. Morgan Freeman is given star billing but very little of substance to do – he plays a fictional abolitionist, Theodore Joadson, who seems to be there merely so that the movie isn't seen to be too unmitigatedly a case of the whites bailing out the blacks. There are jarring, sentimental moments. Spielberg's films have a familiar cadence about them and, when Cinque blurts out his first few words of English, the horribly inappropriate thought flashes in the head: "*ET*!" Hopkins as Adams is a rather too cosy, Alastair Sim-like figure, white-whiskered and avuncular, setting everything to rights with his swerving, liberal rhetoric. Was history really this neat?

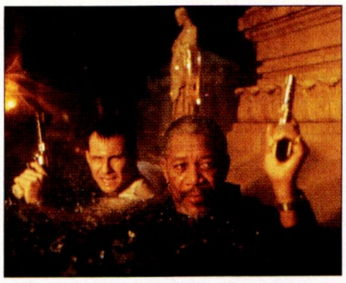
Yet *Amistad* is essential. The flashback sequence to Cinque's capture and subsequent voyage is the most vivid and uncompromising cinematic treatment yet of the cruelty meted out to Africans during the slave trade. Not as good as *Schindler's List*, it's nonetheless equally imperative that you see this.

David Stubbs



Hopkins in *Amistad*: anti-slavery campaigner

Andrew Cooper



Hard Rain

Directed by **Mikael Salomon**
Starring **Morgan Freeman, Christian Slater, Randy Quaid, Minnie Driver**
Opens **Feb 6**, Cert **18**, 96 mins
★★★

SHOT in 1996 as *The Flood*, but withdrawn for re-tooling and re-titling after the recent spate of natural disaster movies failed to create a ripple at the box-office, *Hard Rain* is a hijack thriller set amid a town-swamping flood in storm-lashed Ohio.

Turning in the same kind of superbland performance that he inflicted upon John Woo's *Broken Arrow*, Slater plays Tom, a fresh-faced security guard whose avuncular uncle/partner (Ed Asner) is murdered in the opening act by Morgan Freeman's band of second-rate hijackers. Escaping with Freeman and Co's intended target – three million dollars in security van cash – Slater is pursued by the bickering goons for the rest of the movie, half-heartedly outwitting them against a series of rain-drenched, rural backdrops.

Randy Quaid turns up as the drowning town's exasperated sheriff, Minnie Driver handles whimpering damsel-in-distress duties, and former Golden Girl Betty White plays a supremely-annoying septuagenarian victim of the flood.

They're all painfully aware of the low-quality material they've been lumbered with – and only the ever reliable Freeman makes any attempt to rise above the forehead-slapping, so-bad-its-not-even-funny dialogue.

Director Salomon has obviously indulged in some desperate editing-room tinkering, but the movie remains a victim of its own contrived, multi-genre concept.

Ninety-six *teeth-grating* minutes.

Andrew Sumner

The Ice Storm: a shattering work of quiet genius

The Ice Storm

Directed by **Ang Lee**
Produced by **Ted Hope, James Schamus, Ang Lee**
Screenplay by **James Schamus** Director of Photography **Frederick Elmes**
Editor **Tim Squyres** Music **Mychael Danna**

Starring **Kevin Kline, Joan Allen, Sigourney Weaver, Christina Ricci**
Opens **February 6** Cert **15**, 112 mins
★★★★★

IT is rare that superb acting and lean, resonant direction come together this fluently. Based on Rick Moody's novel about the banalities of suburban wifeswapping and the off-white lies families tell in order to co-exist, this is an amusing, gripping and finally shattering work of quiet genius. It's one of those where anything anyone says for 20 minutes after you leave the cinema is paltry and insufficient.

It begins lightly enough. The early Seventies were, until recently, a velvet goldmine largely unmined by Hollywood. The clothes and mores here aren't as loud and flash as in *Boogie Nights*, but are unerringly accurate. Kevin Kline and Joan Allen play the Hoods, tolerating an ailing marriage while their daughter, Wendy (Ricci), discovers sexuality with the boys next door (prodigious performances from Elijah Wood and Adam Hann-Byrd). The boys' mother, Janey (Weaver), is dispassionately enduring an affair with the Kline character's mid-life crisis. When he starts talking in the post-coital bed, she announces flatly that he's boring her: "I already *have* a husband."

While the Hoods' son (the excellent Tobey Maguire) visits the city to experience a parallel disappointment in love, the web of deceit supporting the two dysfunctional families starts to crumble. A "swinging" cocktail party leads to embarrassment and ennui, and, with the awkward inevitability of real life, a tragedy. An ice storm moves in, the worst over the East Coast for three decades.

Ang Lee films this symbolic winter chill with beautiful understatement, but that's almost the least of the film's charms. Kline, for once not gurning out one of his daffy foreigners, is dryly troubled, while Weaver is frighteningly cynical.

Allen again proves her class, and the youngsters avoid any of the usual pitfalls of teen actors. This is the kind of adult relationship drama the accountants don't let the studios make any more.

The movie is – perhaps ironically – most reminiscent of genuine early Seventies sex'n'sadness studies like *Carnal Knowledge*, but more subtle and a lot less hectoring.

Glacial in style but seething with profoundly emotional content, *The Ice Storm* is one of the most mature films yet made about the perennial immaturity of our lusts.

Chris Roberts

Clubbed To Death

Directed by **Yolande Zauberman**
Starring **Elodie Bouchez, Beatrice Dalle, Roschdy Zem**
Opens **Feb 13**, Cert **15**, 90 mins
★★★

LOLA – always a good name for a French movie heroine – falls asleep on the bus, and winds up at a huge warehouse rave. Here, after being groped by all manner of weirdos, she falls for hunky ex-boxer Emir, and, despite his impotence, sets about stealing him from his long-time lover and "queen of the disco", Saida.

Saida happens to be Beatrice Dalle, these days increasingly reminiscent of a big-boned Morticia Addams, and the best thing about this much-acclaimed but rather flimsy film. Dalle still has immense presence (face it: she is All Woman like few women are All Woman), and can certainly make an entrance: "I am the praying mantis. I love *nobody*."

While much of the hand-held camera-work captures the dizziness and buzz of a sweaty club, this slight tale of sex and alienation hasn't the legs to party for long. There are some Gallic romantic moments between Lola and Emir (Bouchez and Zem), and Dalle plays a woman scorned with shivery charisma. Yet the female director's attempts at "eroticism" are tragically close to Zalman King (*Two Moon Junction*, *Wild Orchid*). You keep expecting David Duchovny to pop up, pat his dog, and read out a moral.

This said, one long scene of the lovers dancing and smooching while Dalle, in tears, spies on them, is evocative of (where is he now?) Léos Carax.

Zauberman has potential then, but this atrociously-titled puppy doesn't dance.

Chris Roberts

Downtime

Directed by **Bharat Nallur**
Starring **Paul McGann, Susan Lynch**
Opens **Feb 13**, Cert **15**, 90 mins
★★★★

HELICOPTERS. Always start with helicopters. The vertiginous opening scene of *Downtime* is as knife-edge tense as any Hollywood thriller, as Susan Lynch perches suicidally on the rain-lashed outside of a 21st-floor balcony floodlit by police choppers. Which comes as some surprise, considering most attempts to transpose gritty American thrills to quaint old England fall laughably flat. Remember *Young Americans*? *Hackers*? Thought not.

But this "*Die Hard* in a decaying Newcastle tower block" succeeds where others have failed because director Nallur ditches the cheesy wannabe-Willis dialogue, slashes the sets budget and concentrates on pure visceral shocks. Having established a spiky love interest between end-of-tether single mum Lynch and her police psychologist saviour, Paul McGann, he devotes the second half of the film to a gutwrenching ordeal of intimidation, fire-bombing, claustrophobia, asphyxiation, vertigo and extreme pain, culminating in a scene where Lynch dangles perilously over a lift shaft, held aloft only by the shard of metal viciously piercing her hand. You can actually hear the audience's buttocks clench.

Although unlikely to crack America, *Downtime* at least reminds us there's more to UK cinema than plummy fops and Robert Carlyle's todger. This one's got balls.

Simon Lewis

S Smith

Downtime: buttock-clenching

The Edge: Hopkins takes the grizzly – 'Come and get me, motherfucker!!'

The Edge

Directed by **Lee Tamahori**
Produced by **Art Linson** Screenplay by **David Mamet**
Director of Photography **Donald M McAlpine** Editor **Neil Travis**
Music **Jerry Goldsmith**

Starring **Anthony Hopkins, Alec Baldwin**
Opens **February 6**, Cert **15**, 117 mins
★★★★

IT'S no surprise that David Mamet's script asks: what makes a man a man? What's more intriguing is that he throws his one oft-reworked question into the thriller genre and marches fearlessly into Iron John territory.

So uncompromisingly does he go about this that we view the unlikely sight of Sir Anthony Hopkins screaming at an advancing and very hungry grizzly bear: "Come and get me, motherfucker!!" Hopkins, so often overpraised, demonstrates everything that's best about his unique approach here, and elevates what could've been generic pulp into an authentic spiritual quest. His intellectual billionaire, Charles Morse, is married to a glamorous model (a vapid, and thus perhaps perfect, turn by Elle MacPherson). Fashion photographer Robert Green (Baldwin) covets her, and much else of Morris' lifestyle. After a horrific plane crash, the two men are stranded in a picturesque but savage rocky mountain range. (Tamahori, of *Once Were Warriors* and *Mulholland Falls* acclaim, shoots all the action sequences with above-par skill and enthusiasm.)

There ensues a battle of wits and wills between Physical Man and Cerebral Man over an awesome backdrop. Mamet circumnavigates triteness, as Hopkins and the fairly impressive (though slightly overshadowed) Baldwin enjoy a dynamic of macho interplay which sometimes echoes *Glengarry Glen Ross* and at other times just goes hell-for-leather through both debate and action.

We genuinely care whether one or both survive not only nature's elemental trials, but also possible betrayal by each other.

"So. How're you planning to kill me?" twinkles Hopkins, with deliciously wise cool.

***The Edge* also stirs memories of *Deliverance* and *Straw Dogs*, while the huge, pissed-off bear is surely a Nineties Moby Dick. Mamet, see, is fundamentally a traditional American playwright. Yet everyone involved here takes the whole game so seriously that the film impales grandeur on its metaphorical skewer, and waves it above its head with a gleeful, manic flourish.**

Gripping and smart, *The Edge* pushes back the envelope of the genre.

Chris Roberts

In The Company Of Men

Directed by **Neil Labute**
Starring **Aaron Eckhart, Matt Malloy, Stacy Edwards**
Opened **Jan 30**, Cert **15**, 97 mins
★★★★★

SWINGERS?? Wasn't that *last* year??

"Let's do it. Let's hurt somebody." So Chad and Howard, two white-collar execs in a featureless office in a nameless city, vent their frustration and sense of injustice at their rejection by girlfriends. They hatch a scheme to seduce a young woman, sleep with her, then ruthlessly drop her, with the aim of inflicting as much pain as possible.

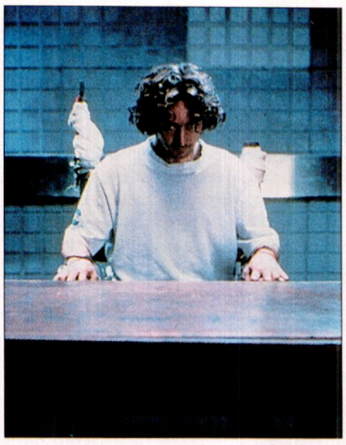
Hell of a premise. This is a brave, startling, ferociously provocative film. Thirty-five-year-old playwright Labute's movie debut won at last year's Sundance, but will divide opinion here. The two lead actors have been physically attacked by women after screenings, while some feminists reckon it's a slice of cut-the-crap genius.

The two men find themselves unexpectedly vying against each other on a psychological battlefield. Howard (Malloy) is vulnerable but selfish; Chad (Eckhart) is a walking embodiment of evil who may just, sadly, be admirable. He does, after all, despise *everybody*, not just females. As Christine, the deaf girl who's caught in the crossfire of one of the most twisted "love" triangles in cinematic history, Edwards breaks every cell of your heart.

Intensely stylised, this is the mother of all debates about chauvinism, but much more. Its black-as-night jokes ("What's the difference between a golf ball and a G-spot? I'd spend 20 minutes looking for a golf ball") exemplify the truth in jest. Doubtless it'll be misunderstood (lines like "Women – inside they're all the same, meat and gristle and hatred: I've had it with their shit" are begging for trouble), but anyone with half a brain who stays 'til the end will appreciate its courage and cunning.

Those of you with a quarter of a brain may find it offensive.

Chris Roberts



The Ugly

Directed by **Scott Reynolds**
Starring **Paolo Rotondo, Rebecca Hobbs**
Opens **Feb 27**, Cert **18**, 91 mins
★★★

NEW Zealand horror. A genre with a pedigree almost as distinguished as Zambian sci-fi. Not the sort of thing to make you rush out to see a 29-year-old director's first, low-budget feature.

But Scott Reynolds has studied the fuhrers of fear – Hitchcock, Raimi, Kubrick – and applies the lessons learned with a cold, unsympathetic rigour to this genuinely disturbing, if small-scale, psycho chiller.

Granted, the actors at first appear better suited to *Neighbours* than *The Silence Of The Lambs*. Rotondo is too surf bum cute to convey the requisite Lecter-ish malice in the title role as self-hating serial killer Simon, locked up and revealing the childhood origins of his psychosis bit by bit to Hobbs' prison psychologist. But dispelling the vapid, beer'n'barbies image of the sunny Down Under seems to be Reynolds' main aim – a series of flashbacks, through bullying, beatings and alienation to matricide and brutal throat-slashing sex, make the idyllic, sunkissed suburbs of Auckland look like chucking out time at Freddy Krueger's local.

A taut, atmospheric thriller which, while it may have its tongue hovering somewhere near its cheek, pulls no punches with the blood and blades, and leaves a nasty coppery taste in the mouth.

Where's Bouncer when you need him, eh?

Simon Lewis

Sick – The Life And Death Of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist

Directed by **Kirby Dick**
Starring **Bob Flanagan**
Opens **Feb 13**, Uncertificated, 90 mins
★★★

SICK, a documentary portraying the last years of Bob Flanagan, performance artist, comedian and masochist, was pieced together from a collection of interviews, performances and fly-on-the-wall video tapings over a three-year period prior to his death from cystic fibrosis. While the title is a reference to Bob's illness, rather than his sexuality, it takes a strong stomach to sit through some of the most extreme scenes ever committed to celluloid.

The interviews with Bob, his dominatrix partner, Sheree Rose ("I was a very bossy child"), and his parents ("Bob's always been very disciplined") reveal a brave and likeable man, with a remarkable lack of bitterness. As a comedian, a cross between Spalding Gray and Bill Hicks, he was frequently hilarious – his fatalistic take on *Mary Poppins* ("Supermasochistic

BFI

Bob's got cystic fibrosis") represents the film's finest moment. Elsewhere, there is a piece of pure surrealism as a Canadian teenager and CF sufferer talks of her wish to meet Flanagan, while her mother sits alongside, clearly wishing her daughter had chosen Bryan Adams as a hero, rather than a man who nails his todger to a plank of wood.

Less palatable is the final half-hour of the film. A spliced together series of Flanagan's coughing fits, and a sequence of photos of the newly dead Flanagan cross the boundary between the uncompromising and the merely voyeuristic. As for the sex, let's just say that these images will linger every time I see a freshly stuffed turkey, or a plate of chipolatas.

Probably not the best film for a first date.

Robert McTaggart

***The Blackout*: blinding flashes, searing performances**

The Blackout

Directed by **Abel Ferrara**
Produced by **Ed Pressman**, **Clayton Townsend**
Screenplay by **Marla Hanson, Christ Zois, Abel Ferrara**
Director of Photography **Ken Kelsch** Editor **Anthony Redman**
Music **Joe Delia**, **Schooly D**

Starring **Matthew Modine**, **Claudia Schiffer**, **Beatrice Dalle**, **Dennis Hopper**
Opens **February 13**, Cert **18**, 95 mins
★★★

ANOTHER headlong dive into the heart of darkness and the American nightmare from Ferrara, who's now becoming a little too self-referential for discomfort. Matthew Modine's Matty, a frazzled film star, is basically another bad lieutenant on a lost weekend, chasing his own funeral.

There are some blinding flashes amid this particular blackout, and some truly searing performances (Modine makes Cage in *Leaving Las Vegas* seem like a Hooch-tippler). Yet as a film and a story, it's – to be generous – *impressionistic*.

Any semblance of a linear narrative is pure spaghetti, although post-viewing it's possible to report the following: Matty was once in love with Annie 1 (Dalle), but thinks he's now in love with Annie 2 (Sarah Lassez). So he's left his nice-but-boring girlfriend, Susan (Schiffer, well cast and low on presence). A possibly perverted and definitely demented club-owner and film director, Micky (Hopper – who else?) can provide the alcoholic Matty with some clues as to who's who in his search for the woman he wants.

Matty and Micky travel through past, present and conceivably future (though it's hard to be sure) by means of sex, drugs and videotape. Matty eventually embraces a bleak fate which was portrayed with greater class in the aforementioned Mike Figgis film.

Modine, however, is a revelation. So often cast as jaunty and lightweight, he's a thoroughly convincing (and repellent) masochist here, and carries the considerable burden of the film. The resurgent Beatrice Dalle is also striking, if underused. Hopper is just Hopper, and Schiffer is Weetabix. If Modine matches Keitel's legacy blow for blow, Ferrara fails to deliver anything he hasn't rubbed our noses in before. *Dangerous Games* said more about Hollywood scuzz, and most of his portfolio has covered self-loathing and nihilism to more savage effect. Lines such as "I've been crying for two years, my guts are comin' outta my stomach" are only given drive by Modine's commitment, while the cinematographer and editor repeatedly take their eye off the ball.

Ferrara needs to find a new light, or he'll fade to grey.

Chris Roberts

Prisoner Of The Mountains

Directed by **Sergei Bodrov**
Starring **Oleg Menshikov, Sergei Bodrov Jnr, Djemel Sikharulidze, Susanna Mekhralieva**
Opens **Feb 20**, Cert **15**, 95 mins
★★★★

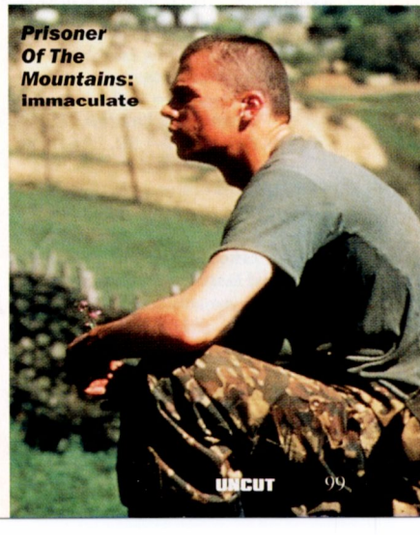
AFTER Srdjan Dragojevic's astonishing *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* comes another snapshot of the poisonous aftermath of the Communist era. Updated from the Tolstoy novel, *Caucasian Captive*, to reflect the conflict in Chechnya, *Prisoner Of The Mountains* has already received widespread recognition, scooping the Cannes Audience Award, and gaining an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film in 1996.

War-weary cynic Sacha (Menshikov) and new recruit Vanya (Bodrov Jnr) are captured by Chechnyan rebels, and removed to a remote mountain top village, where they are held while elder Abdul-Marat (Sikharulidze) negotiates an exchange for his son, imprisoned by the Russians. As the days pass, the hostages grow closer, and Vanya befriends Dina, Abdul-Marat's beautiful young daughter (Mekhralieva). Only when the soldiers attempt escape do things take a turn for the worst.

Unlike Dragojevic's view of war as a tragically unavoidable evil, Siberian-born director Bodrov takes a resolutely anti-war stance. He tells his story simply, and the gentle pace allows breathing space to develop the camaraderie between Sacha and Vanya. Menshikov gives a staggeringly emotive performance, and the director's son is thoroughly charming as the kindly innocent, Vanya. The film is stylistically reminiscent of Emir Custarica (*Time Of The Gypsies*), and although lacking the Bosnian's unique magical vision, the breathtakingly-shot mountain scenery and subtle use of traditional music create a stirring and beautiful atmosphere, which renders the conclusion all the more shocking.

As a testament to the humanity of man and the inhumanity of war, *Prisoner . . .* is an immaculate piece of film-making.

Robert McTaggart



***Prisoner Of The Mountains*: immaculate**

Butcher Boy: a powerful indictment of childhood

Butcher Boy

Directed by **Neil Jordan**
Produced by **Redmond Morris** and **Stephen Woolley**
Screenplay by **Neil Jordan** and **Patrick McCabe**
Director of Photography **Adrian Biddle**
Editor **Tony Lawson** Music **Elliot Goldenthal**

Starring **Eamonn Owens, Stephen Rea, Fiona Shaw, Sinéad O'Connor**
Opens **February 20**, Cert **15**, 108 mins
★★★★

NEIL Jordan returns to Irish territory, with an unsentimental view of childhood based upon the award-winning novel by Patrick McCabe. Francie Brady (Owens) and his best friend, Joe (Alan Boyle), are blood brothers on the verge of their teenage years, their friendship cemented by a shared love of cowboys and comics. For Francie, these fantasy worlds are preferable to real life, since his father (Rea) is a failed musician and a violent drunk, and his mother is mentally unstable.

When Francie's life goes from bad to worse, he blames his troubles on a nosy neighbour, Mrs Nugent (Shaw), and duly exacts revenge. So begins a rake's progress that leads him from a Catholic-run approved school (where he's victimised by pervy priests) to electroshock in a mental hospital (with a brief stint in between as the butcher's boy of the title).

Set against the backdrop of the Cuban missile crisis, it's ostensibly a black comedy, but the laughs come uneasily here (although there are plenty of sideswipes at Irish Catholicism); in truth, it's more bleak than black, and genuinely tragic. It's about the loss, not of innocence, but of childhood itself.

Eamonn Owens virtually carries the whole film, since the story is told from Francie's point of view, with the adult roles remaining sketchy and shadowy. Even Rea has little to do but drink, though he does also narrate the proceedings and – in the final scene – pretty much steals the movie as the adult Francie. But Owens turns in a fine performance as the boy who's part Dennis the Menace, part Jack the Ripper, and he's supported by a fine cast of cameo players that includes Sean Hughes (as a psychiatrist), Ardal O'Hanlon and Milo O'Shea. And – in a piece of casting that's bound to set the Vatican in a tizz – we also get Sinéad O'Connor as the Virgin Mary, and very good she is, too. Typecasting, perhaps.

If the film fails, it's because you don't have that much sympathy for its protagonist. Much as one feels for Francie – the fact remains that he's a bully, and simply deeply unlikeable. Or perhaps that's the point. Nonetheless, this is a film that stays with you for days, a powerful indictment of childhood on a par with *Welcome To The Dollhouse* or *Lord Of The Flies*.

Peter Hogan

Artificial Eye

La Maman Et La Putain

Directed by **Jean Eustache**
Starring **Jean-Pierre Leaud, Bernadette Lafont, Francoise Lebrun**
Opens **Feb 27**, Cert **18,** 215 mins
★★★★

JEAN Eustache is approximately the Tim Buckley of French cinema. This 1972 magnum opus, cheaply shot in his flat and local bistros, won at Cannes in the year of *Last Tango In Paris* (which also featured the versatile Leaud). Its confessional intensity, and frank discussions on sex and marriage, caused much controversy, but Eustache's suicide in 1981 has fashioned it with a near-legendary, generation-defining kudos.

Now in a new print with modified subtitles, it's long and rambling, and its monochromes are ruthlessly grainy. It aspires to be novelistic, to examine a concept that at the time hadn't been defined as politically incorrect: an indulgent, self-regarding young man's attraction to various women, most classically "the mother" and "the whore". Leaud plays Alexandre, nominally a writer, who spends his time lazing around, spouting crap in cafes and chasing skirt. After losing former girlfriend Gilberte (one of the most wooden performances of all time by the hapless Isabelle Weingarten), he's torn between older mistress Marie (Lafont) and complex flirt Veronika (Lebrun). Somebody gets pregnant; Alexandre has to learn how to commit. And that's it. It's made to last four hours with much pseudo-philosophising and aphoristic abstraction.

It becomes hypnotic after a while, melancholic and earnest, despite the dodgy flares, scarves, and other hippy trappings. It's either a profound and timeless dissection of male-female relationships or a bunch of prototype Euro-slackers talking bollocks. You decide.

Chris Roberts

The Woodlanders

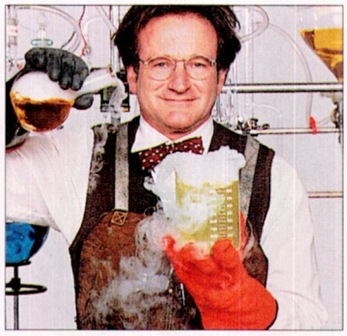
Directed by **Phil Agland**
Starring **Emily Woof, Cal MacAninch**
Opens **Feb 6,** Cert **PG**, 97 mins
★★

ADAPTED from the Thomas Hardy novel of the same name, *The Woodlanders* follows Grace Melbury (Woof), a permanently faint, breathless young maiden who returns to the wooded village of Little Hintock after being away at finishing school. Within hours of her return, she feels changed, her aspirations no longer meeting those of Giles, her poverty-stricken, cider-making childhood sweetheart. In an act of shameless social ladder-climbing engineered by her dad, she gets off with FitzPiers, the well-to-do, snotbag doctor next door – leaving her bit of rough to his logs and cider.

All the rural costume drama stereotypes are here: "poor woodcutter bloke", "posh bird", "protective, grumpy father", "peasant girl". These are fiercely stubborn people who put pride and societal respect above their dreams. FitzPiers has to philander with ye olde *femme fatale,* Mrs Charmond, and elope with her to Europe before Grace finally decides he's a slithering, duplicitous tosspot and takes back her emotional punchbag Giles. Giles, in turn, nobly refuses to stay in the same house as Grace until her marriage to FitzPiers has been undone, and ends up sleeping out in the rain and dying of pneumonia. Needless to say, all this does nothing for the cause of the downtrodden, and even less for women's lib.

Proof, alongside Polanski's uneventful *Tess*, of Hardy's fateful, epoch-defining fiction's disturbing tendency to turn to over-romanticised tosh via the big screen.

Tom Cox



Flubber

Directed by **Les Mayfield**
Starring **Robin Williams, Marcia Gay Harden, Christopher McDonald**
Opens **Feb 6**, Cert **PG**, 94 mins
★★

A REMAKE of the 1960 comedy, *The Absent Minded Professor*, with Robin Williams taking over from Fred MacMurray in the starring role, this is a not-bad, not-good timewaster that might keep the kids happy, but offers precious little for the adult audience.

Williams plays a nutty professor who invents a green goo that splits itself into flying snotballs, and, when applied to objects or people, invests them with Superman-like powers of levitation. Cue flying cars, flying people and some *Home Alone*-style violence when bowling balls and household implements rally round to batter the baddies out to steal the stuff.

It's no surprise to see *Home Alone* creator John Hughes' name on the writing credits, nor to see the baddies survive an assault that in real life would put them into a coffin or at the very least a coma. But, hey, this is don't-try-this-at-home comedy for kiddies, so who cares about realism?

There's nothing remotely realistic about the scene where the flubber divides itself into a mambo-dancing Busby Berkeley chorus, but with music by Danny Elfman this is the closest the movie gets to the inspired lunacy of a director like Tim Burton. The bit where a character swallows the goo and it literally explodes out of his ass is pretty radical for a Disney movie, too, but for the most part, *Flubber* is just computer-generated idiocy.

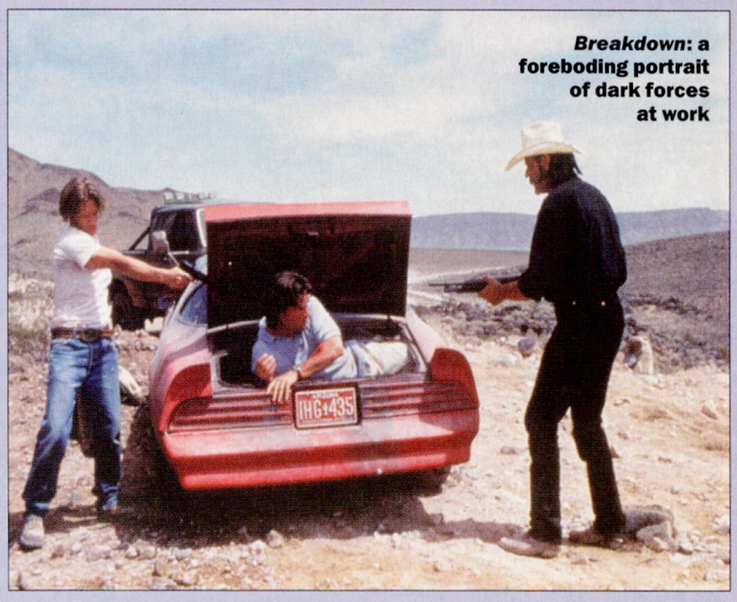
Simon Button

Breakdown

Directed by **Jonathan Mostow**
Produced by **Martha** and **Dino De Laurentiis**
Screenplay **Jonathan Mostow** and **Sam Montgomery**
Director of Photography **Doug Milsome** Music **Basil Poledouris**

Starring **Kurt Russell, Kathleen Quinlan, JT Walsh**
Opens **February 13**, Cert **15**, 93 mins

★★★



***Breakdown*: a foreboding portrait of dark forces at work**

KURT Russell's latest starring vehicle takes his trademark "everyman" persona and boots it straight into the twisted black heart of the redneck American South-West.

He stars as Jeff Taylor, a failed businessman who's poured his last cent into a state-of-the-art Jeep, packed up everything he owns and sets off across country with his loving wife, Amy (Kathleen Quinlan). When his shiny new vehicle breaks down, Jeff elects to stand guard while cheery passing truck driver Red Barr (JT Walsh) drives Amy to get help at a local diner.

After they've gone, Jeff manages to fix the problem himself, but then his *real* troubles begin – no one at the diner has seen or heard of Amy.

Even worse, the newly-reappeared (but no longer friendly) Red denies all knowledge of their earlier encounter. Suddenly, Jeff is trapped in every suburbanite's worst nightmare: his wife has vanished, he's smack in the middle of the twilight zone and there's no one he can turn to.

Director Jonathan Mostow and his co-writer, Sam Montgomery, have cooked up a derivative Hollywood thriller that's equal parts Spielberg's *Duel* and George Sluizer's *The Vanishing* while also having an eerie life of its own. Doug Milsome (Kubrick's cinematographer on *Full Metal Jacket*) fills the screen with ominous widescreen images which fuel their foreboding portrait of dark forces at work and set *Breakdown* apart from most recent action outings.

Russell paints a convincing portrait of a nervous city slicker forced to overcome his fears and take on a rogue's gallery of snarling country boys, while the always-assured Kathleen Quinlan shows some courageous steel as the wife/victim. Walsh confirms his position as Hollywood's greatest contemporary character actor – Red Barr is a truly memorable sociopath whose well-mannered brand of casual evil is made all the more disturbing by Walsh's careful underplaying.

There is, of course, a down side to all of this – whether by influence (from *uber*producer Dino De Laurentiis) or design, *Breakdown*'s climax can't live up to its doom-laden set-up.

The final third descends into production-line pyrotechnics, relying on a pile of flashy action licks at odds with Mostow's carefully sustained, otherworldly atmosphere.

That said, the final payoff is cruelly satisfying, restoring order without pandering to a soft-hearted US audience, and *Breakdown* adds up to an entertainingly fast-paced tour through the vast, impersonal American heartland, the genuine nightmare potential of which is all too apparent to anyone who's driven through it.

Andrew Sumner

Now at H.Samuel

That was then...

...this is now

Looking in the past? Not a time traveller? Move forward with Futurist from Casio. Great form, sharp function. Don't look back. Illuminator backlight display, daily alarm and stopwatch.

FUTURIST AT H.SAMUEL

From just £25 there are seven Futurist models, all exclusively available from branches of H.Samuel. Models shown: A200W (mens) £29.99, LA200WE (ladies) £29.99.

Godard and the Stones: *les enfants terribles*

BFI

Bittersweet Sympathy

The Stones meet the Godard-like genius of Jean-Luc

One Plus One
Directed by **Jean-Luc Godard**
Starring **The Rolling Stones**
Connoisseur/BFI
★★★★★

IT is either the best or the worst rock movie ever made. Perhaps it is both at one and the same time, but no one can possibly feel ambivalent about Jean-Luc Godard's *One Plus One*, an extraordinary, difficult and compelling 1968 period-piece featuring their satanic majesties, The Rolling Stones. Of course, coming from the *enfant terrible* of French New Wave cinema, *One Plus One* is anything but a conventional rock documentary. Half of the film consists of fly-on-the-wall scenes of the Stones rehearsing and recording the notorious "Sympathy For The Devil" in London's Olympic studios during the summer of 1968. Yet arguably it is not a rock movie at all, taking in such themes as black power, the nature of bourgeois culture and Marxist revolutionary theory. *One Plus One* is a movie in which context is all, a radical hard-left cinematic tract which merely uses a rock'n'roll band to reflect the heady perfume of the times.

video classic of the month

During the spring and summer of 1968 across the world, the first Summer Of Love had given way to a more political, angrier mood of street revolt. Revolution was in the air and, for a moment at least, the forces of both Western capitalism and Soviet communism trembled. In America, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated within two months of each other. There were riots in 126 cities, the Yippie movement was formed by Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, the anti-Vietnam war protests escalated and the Black Panthers were striking fear into the heart of the white establishment in Washington.

In Eastern Europe, it was the time of the Prague Spring, and there were student riots in Warsaw. Across Western Europe the rallying cry went up across the campuses, "We shall fight, we shall win, Paris, London, Rome, Berlin." In Germany, the student leader, Rudi Dutschke, was wounded by a would-be assassin, sparking a virtual student insurrection and the heaviest street-fighting since the days of the Weimar Republic. In France, students and the state fought openly on the streets of Paris, and the Gaullist government was almost brought to its knees as the workers sided briefly with the radicals.

Even in sleepy London town, tradi-

tionally no place for comrades of the street-fighting persuasion, the shock waves reverberated. In March, violence spilled onto the streets during an anti-Vietnam war demonstration outside the American embassy in Grosvenor Square. Student occupations of many universities and colleges followed. Enoch Powell stoked the fires further with his inflammatory "rivers of blood" speech, while underground publications such as *International Times* and Tariq Ali's *Black Dwarf* spread the word and fuelled the burgeoning counterculture.

The Stones, and Mick Jagger in particular, were intoxicated by the excitement all around them. Although they had made a fine and under-rated psychedelic album in 1967's *Their Satantic Majesties Request*, flower power ill-suited a raw R'n'B band with a reputation as rock's bad boys. The spring of 1968, with its mix of danger and revolt, fitted the Stones' tough, uncompromising stance far better. As Jagger recalled many years later: "It was a very good period, 1968 – there was a good feeling in the air. It was a very creative period for everyone."

Unlike Lennon, the Stones' singer did not throw himself totally into the struggle, always retaining a certain ambivalence towards the professional agitators and protesters who, in return, remained suspicious of the motives behind his flirtation with revolution. Yet the 24-year-old Jagger – rich, talented, beautiful and intelligent – could not help but be carried along by the passion and militancy that looked briefly as if it might bring governments tumbling down. The result was a creative flowering which produced the magnificent *Beggars Banquet* album, including the agit-pop of both "Street Fighting Man" and "Sympathy For The Devil", the latter with its lyrics hastily rewritten following Robert Kennedy's assassination while the band was recording the song.

Jagger was as excited intellectually as much as politically by the mood of the times, and his ego was undoubtedly flattered by the chance to work with Jean-Luc Godard. The filmmaker had arrived in London as the didactic high priest of French modernism, his already radical politics sent into revolutionary overdrive by the events in Paris during May, 1968. He was, perhaps, the only director at the time to whom Jagger would have granted unrestricted studio access.

One Plus One contains none of the fast-paced techniques of modern pop videos, the camera shooting long, unedited and, at times, tedious sequences of the band rehearsing. Godard's fascination was with the process rather than the product as slowly, "Sympathy For The Devil" takes shape before our eyes and ears, transformed from an acoustic strum featuring Jagger, Keith Richards and a shadowy Brian Jones into the glorious, high-octane Molotov cocktail of the final take.

Not everyone enjoyed the experience. George Chkiantz, the hapless engineer, said later: "'Sympathy For The Devil' was a nightmare from start to end. It went on for several days. There was all the film crew mucking around in it. The song changed out of all recognition, from one end to the other. You could see a development and it was quite interesting, but it was very tiring."

Brian Jones and Godard: gone plus one

BFI

At one point during the filming the studio caught fire due to a faulty arc lamp. Typically, Godard included none of the dramatic scenes of fire engines extinguishing the blaze. That might have made good cinema in conventional terms, but it would have broken the concentration of his tight focus.

As a portrait of the Stones, *One Plus One* is revealing of the extent to which they were a two-man band. We see Jagger totally in control, telling Charlie Watts that his drumming sounds "a bit dead" while Richards conducts with gestures and hand signals. Brian Jones' acoustic guitar is inaudible and he is almost invisible, head down behind the studio panelling. Richards takes over the bass from Bill Wyman, who is reduced to shaking a pair of castanets. The driving rhythm of the final version comes not from Watts and Wyman, but from the congas of Rocky Dijon, carefully coached by Jagger and Richards.

Yet it is even more revealing as a snapshot, or rather a collage, of the times in which it was made. Away from the scenes of the Stones in the studio, Godard abandons any attempt at narrative and instead creates a fragmentary kaleidoscope – gun-toting, black power activists, a surreal interview with Eve Democracy (the beautiful Anne Wiazemsky) about the meaning of art – while spray-can graffiti appears everywhere. The text, comprised of black power slogans, Marxist theory and Michael Moorcock-style futuristic political fantasies, competes with the sounds of jet engines and other extraneous noise.

In October, after the film was finished, but while the Stones were still wrangling over the release of *Beggars Banquet* (Decca refused to put it out in the original sleeve depicting a graffiti-covered toilet), Tariq Ali asked Jagger for a handwritten copy of the lyrics to "Street Fighting Man" for publication in a special edition of *Black Dwarf* being prepared for a new anti-Vietnam war confrontation outside the American embassy.

The singer readily complied and the magazine's front-page declared "Mick Jagger and Fred Engels On Street Fighting," as the words of the Stones' song appeared alongside a 19th-century Marxist tract on armed combat on the barricades. This was all a long way from Jagger's later jet-setting with Princess Margaret on the island of Mustique.

Godard, meanwhile, was doing his own street-fighting. To the director's outrage the producer, Iain Quarrier, had re-edited the film to include the full and finished version of the Stones' song and had retitled the movie *Sympathy For The Devil*. At the première during the London Film Festival at the National Film Theatre, Godard stormed the stage, punched the producer and exhorted the audience to attend a screening of his own version beneath Waterloo Bridge instead.

It was a fittingly extraordinary twist in the tale of an extraordinary document of some extraordinary times.

Nigel Williamson

VIDEOS TO BUY

DAYS OF '68

January 30: Vietcong launches Tet offensive and American troops temporarily lose control of all South Vietnamese provincial towns

March 16: American troops in Vietnam commit My Lai massacre

March 17: Police and demonstrators clash on the streets of London as Vietnam Solidarity Campaign stages demonstration in Grosvenor Square. Mick Jagger joins the protesters

April 4: Martin Luther King shot dead in Memphis. Riots follow across America

April 14: Rudi Dutschke shot in Germany. Student insurrection follows

April 20: Enoch Powell delivers racially provocative "rivers of blood" speech

May 1: Height of the Prague Spring as Czech workers march in defiance of Soviet Union and in support of Dubcek's "socialism with a human face"

Associated Press

May 10: Night of the barricades in Paris as students confront the French security forces

June 1: The Rolling Stones enter the studio to begin recording *Beggars Banquet*

Associated Press

June 5: Robert Kennedy shot in Los Angeles after winning the Californian Democratic primary and dies the next day

July 26: Decca bans the Stones' proposed cover for *Beggars Banquet*

August 20: Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia

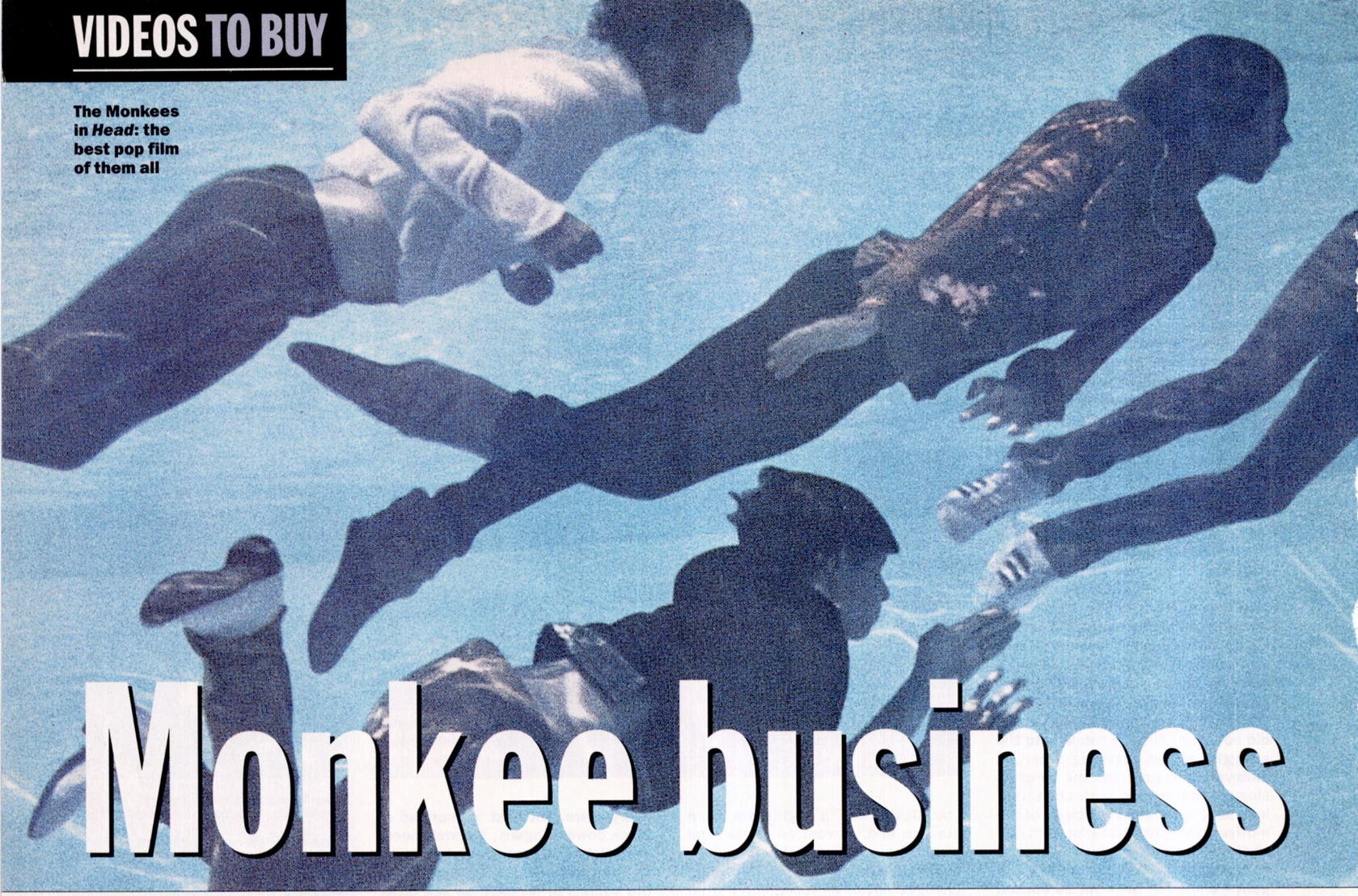
Associated Press

September 26: Brian Jones found guilty of possession of cannabis

October 12: Olympic Games start in Mexico City. Two American athletes give clenched-fist black power salute as "The Star Spangled Banner" is played

October 27: Another VSC demonstration in Grosvenor Square. *Black Dwarf* publishes Jagger's hand-written version of "Street Fighting Man"

December 21: *Beggars Banquet* finally released in a plain white sleeve



The Monkees in *Head*: the best pop film of them all

Monkee business

Head

Directed by **Bob Rafelson**
Starring **The Monkees, Jack Nicholson**
(Warner Home Video, £10.99)
★★★★★

WHEN work began on the first and only Monkees movie in late 1967, they were arguably the biggest pop group in the world. Columbia Pictures sank the best part of a million dollars into what they must have expected to be a feature-length episode of the highly successful TV series.

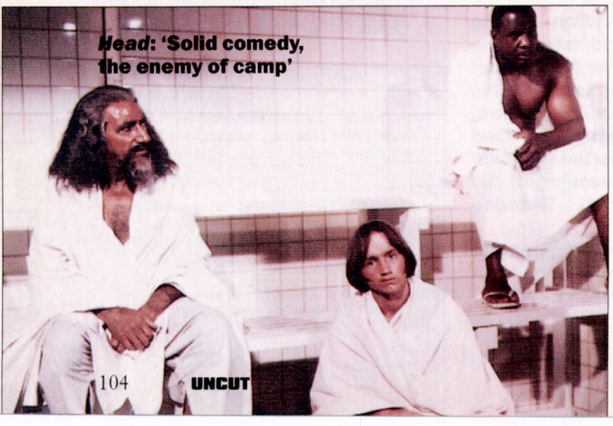
Thing was, nobody involved in the TV show had the slightest intention of doing this. Behind Columbia's backs, The Monkees had started evolving from the ersatz Fab Four who mimed "Last Train To Clarksville" into a group capable of writing, recording and producing the majority of their latest LP, *Headquarters*. Heck, Mickey Dolenz had even got a perm to look more like his hero, Tim Buckley.

They locked themselves away in a hotel room in Ojai, California for a weekend with the TV show's producers, Bob Rafelson and Bert Schneider, and an out-of-work actor called Jack Nicholson, and got very esoteric.

The result was *Head*. What Rafelson described at the time as a "solid comedy, the enemy of camp" opens with Dolenz committing suicide by leaping from a suspension bridge and drowning in a psychedelicised river to the sound of Goffin and King's impossibly beautiful "Porpoise Song".

This scene frames the film – the group collectively kill themselves at the end – and is the only action that gives the film any structure. The rest is a pop culture collage – Rafelson thought he'd never get to make another film so he condensed 50 of them into 90 minutes.

During a series of surreal, interchangeable vignettes, Mickey blows up a Coke-vending machine with a tank, Davy is beaten to a pulp in the ring by Sonny Liston, and the boys act as dandruff in Victor (as in their label, RCA Victor) Mature's hair. This is all rapidly intercut with adverts for Ford dealers and Playtex bras, and brief snippets of classic Hollywood. There's a certain amount of self-deprecation, but it's always tempered (after Davy's tortuous song-and-dance routine for "Daddy's Song", Frank Zappa opines, "That song was pretty white." To which Jones deadpans, "What can I tell you? So am I").



Head: 'Solid comedy, the enemy of camp'

BFI

That this is the quartet's most cohesive effort as a real band is born out by the live footage of Mike Nesmith's electric "Circle Sky". All decked out in white, in front of Salt Lake City's young and beautiful, The Monkees are driving and mesmeric, true power pop.

Rafelson mixes the concert with shots of Vietcong soldiers having their brains blown out. Rather than flippant anti-war sentiment, this was a tart reminder to opt-out youth culture – later, Peter Tork smiles beatifically while murmuring Maharishi-isms only to admit (still smiling) that he hasn't got a clue what he's talking about.

So bold is its conceit that if *Head* had attempted any kind of structure it would have been unbearably pompous. Rafelson and Nicholson were smart and slippery. They stitched the raw scenes together in a bewildering, impressionistic way. There are no opening credits.

"It's anti-rock," claimed Nicholson in 1970. "I saw *Head* 150 million times. I loved it." During filming, the group were even more gushing: "Our film is going to astound the world," blahed Nesmith, with Dolenz adding: "Even The Beatles wouldn't be able to duplicate what we're doing . . . *Head* is the movie of tomorrow."

In a way, he was right. A film described by one critic at the time as "8½ directed by a flower child" was obviously not going to pull in their core teeny fan base, while the "heads" weren't willing to give the loathed Monkees the time of day.

After a three-day run in Manhattan in November, 1968, by which time the TV series had been cancelled, it wasn't granted a general release, and was rejected completely in Britain. So low was its profile that, although The Monkees were regulars on British telly for every school holidays throughout the Seventies, it took until 1986 for Channel Four to give *Head* its first airing, by which time it had become a huge cult item.

Sick of the monster he'd helped create, Rafelson had seen *Head* as a way of killing off The Monkees in a blaze of myth-exploding glory. During the filming, he'd goaded Davy Jones by playing Neil Young at full volume, saying: "*That's* rock'n'roll, man!"

The hapless group had seen *Head* as a new dawn. Freed from the confines of the TV series, they'd dreamed of further films, musicals even. In reality, there was the TV special, *33⅓ Revolutions Per Monkee*: where *Head* used a sleight of hand, this special was in every way a shambles.

A Hard Day's Night and *Slade In Flame* are as pure and honest, but *Head* – sharp and quick but just as impenetrable – is the best pop film of them all. The French, as is their wont, hailed it as a masterpiece on release. For once, they were right.

Bob Stanley

Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song
(Xenon Video, £12.99) ★★★★

THE Blaxploitation revival must really be kicking in: Melvin Van Peebles' 1971 breakthrough film gets a deserved revival. Viscerally angry, this roars at Whitey – "The Man" – with a conviction and sense of injustice rarely equalled since. Also features the seminal Earth Wind & Fire theme tune, and some dodgy grunting sex. Worth it for that spelling of "baadasssss", any which way.

Microcosmos
(Pathe, £12.99) ★★

VASTLY successful French film, but as far from what we think of as "French cinema" as is conceivable. This is a nature documentary which is obsessed with the secrets (and indeed, secretions) of slugs and snails, who seem to have sex (often with themselves) more than is strictly necessary. More slime than David Beckham's hair. Repulsive.

L'Appartement
(Artificial Eye, £15.99) ★★★★

HITCHOCKIAN plot twists meet Truffaut-esque romantic whimsy in the luscious modern-day Paris of Gilles Mimou's exquisite debut feature. Vincent Cassel, several light years removed from his psycho skinhead in *La Haine*, plays a lovelorn sucker tied in knots by his own lusty longings, cancelling his wedding for a reunion with an old flame. Before long, he has lost everything but his sanity while the mysteries of womankind remain as unfathomable as ever. Exactly the sort of magical little film which the French supposedly don't make any more.

American Buffalo
(Film Four, £14.99) ★★★

MUCH Mamet mumbling and absence of action from Dustin Hoffman and Dennis Franz (Sipowitz from *NYPD Blue*). Again Mamet borrows shamelessly from European Sixties and Seventies theatre, but the performances go for Everyman-loser grit and get there. Dustin is determined, Franz is fractious.

You'll be sucked in.

Rocky
(MGM, £5.99) ★★★

A SLIGHTLY dim boxer, played by a slightly dim actor (who wrote the script), defies the odds and becomes a world-beater. In a bizarre parallel, the film wins the 1976 Best Film Oscar. Sylvester Stallone is from this point on a box-office giant. It's a mad, mad, mad world. In fairness, this baloney was always easy to enjoy: it was the trashy, punch-drunk sequels which soiled the franchise.

Shine
(Miramax Home Entertainment, £14.99) ★★★★

THE best movie ever made about classical music and a beautifully balanced discourse on the blurred border between genius and madness, Scott Hicks' surprise true-story smash scored a well-earned Oscar for screen newcomer Jeffrey Rush as emotionally scarred Australian concert pianist David Helfgott.

Filmed with great poetry and elegant economy, this life-affirming hymn to human resilience is refreshingly free of mawkish sentiment or patronising pity.

Portraits Chinois
(Film Four, £14.99) ★★★★

GALLIC oddity with Romane Bohringer as inexplicably compelling as ever, and Helena Bonham Carter consolidating the most impressive year of her career by speaking fluent French without once playing to the gallery. Altman's *Prêt-A-Porter* proved that movies about the fashion world can be disastrous: this somehow trips through a lightly layered examination of female bonding and, dare it be said, the nature of creativity.

William Shakespeare's Romeo And Juliet
(Fox Home Entertainment, £14.99) ★★★★

A BEJEWELLED gauntlet flung at the feet of all those arse-numbing Bard adaptations, *Strictly Ballroom* creator Baz Luhrmann's dazzling turbocharged update of the Bard's most youth-oriented tragedy gets a suitably rock'n'roll makeover. Sex and guns and revved-up MTV visuals might smack of gimmickry, but Luhrmann respects the text while intoxicating the senses. Conclusive proof, along with Pacino's *Looking For Richard*, that Yanks do Shakespeare far better than any number of stuffy old Brit luvvies.

Beautiful Girls: beautifully written, superbly acted

Surface tension

Beautiful Girls
Directed by **Ted Demme**
Starring **Timothy Hutton, Matt Dillon, Uma Thurman**
(Hollywood Pictures, £12.99)
★★★★★

SCOTT Rosenberg's third script, after *Things To Do In Denver When You're Dead* and *Con Air*, is a low-key ensemble piece with Timothy Hutton returning for a high school reunion to the small town where he grew up to discover that little has changed for his friends – Matt Dillon, Michael Rapaport, Mira Sorvino, Rosie O'Donnell and Lauren Holly. The boys still want beautiful girls (cue Uma Thurman entrance), but don't realise that the girls they have *are* beautiful. The Lolita-esque subtext between Hutton and Nathalie Portman is the icing on the cake for this beautifully written, superbly acted drama.

A classic.

Michael Bonner

Tierra
(Tartan Video, £14.99) ★★★★

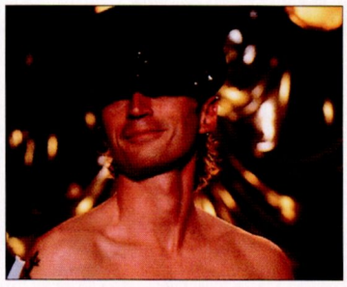
MEDEM's follow up to the masterful *The Red Squirrel* concerns the arrival of Angel, a complex young man prone to out-of-body experiences, in a wine-growing region of Spain. A little overstretched, but the director's fascination for the metaphysical and his stunningly atmospheric visuals make for an original and hallucinatory piece of work.

Stealing Beauty
(Fox Home Entertainment, £12.99) ★★★

BERTOLUCCI ditches the windy pomposity of his latterday career for this charmingly low-key return to his native Italy. Lovingly filmed like a modern-day Boticelli angel, Liv Tyler plays a sensitive grunge-generation American teenager seeking out her family roots while attempting to lose her virginity at a dissolute artists' commune in the stunning Tuscan hinterlands. A slender poem of a film occasionally touched by magic.

Twin Town
(Film Four, £14.99) ★★★★

THE *Trainspotting* comparisons made perfect marketing sense, but first-time director Kevin Allen's love-hate homage to his former Swansea manor is far more gleefully nihilistic than that. An exhilaratingly coarse comic fable – in which the hilariously zonked-out Lewis twins vow vengeance on a local small-time gangster for refusing to compensate their injured father – it begins like a live-action cartoon before escalating into a drugged-up, explosively grisly showdown. *Under Milk Wood* on crack, anyone?



The Full Monty
(Fox Home Entertainment, £14.99) ★★★

ONE wonders if in two years' time the great British public will be as faintly embarrassed about the runaway success of this slight, easy-chuckles story as it now is about *Four Weddings* . . . One also wonders what's so compelling about fat men in thongs, but hey, it works for the Japanese. Reliant on Hot Chocolate's godlike "You Sexy Thing" for its much-vaunted feelgood factor, this deserves a come-uppance, although Robert Carlyle is, as ever, blameless.

Flirting With Disaster
(Miramax, £14.99) ★★★★

QUIRKY road movie about a quest for identity. Adopted as a child, Ben Stiller sets off across America in search of his real parents, accompanied by his long-suffering wife (Patricia Arquette), their newborn baby and a social psychologist (Tea Leoni) who's filming the quest (and flirting with Stiller). En route they encounter mad bikers, middle-aged acid dealers (Lily Tomlin and Alan Alda), gay cops and Mary Tyler Moore's cleavage.

Recommended.

Sabata: faces that laugh as a recently dispatched corpse twitches under their gaze

Kobal Collection

Pasta la vista!

Sabata
Directed by **Gianfranco Parolini**
Starring **Lee Van Cleef, William Berger**
★★★★
Adios Sabata
Directed by **Gianfranco Parolini**
Starring **Yul Brynner, Dean Read**
★★★
The Return Of Sabata
Directed by **Gianfranco Parolini**
Starring **Lee Van Cleef, Reiner Schone**
★★★★
(Warner Home Video, all £5.99)

HE's a goddamn insect. Unnaturally thin, bones nearly breaking through his face to lend supreme cruelty to every glance, every smile a murderous sneer, every blank expression loaded with violent intent . . .

If all Western directors need stock companies, then Leone's was far and away superior in terms of sheer physical twistedness. Van Cleef, Eli Wallach, Gian Maria Volonté, these aren't just faces only a mother could love, these are faces so pitted and riven with living they inhabit the time in which they're set perfectly; faces so alien you can't imagine these steeped, sodden visages actually living in our time.

No, these are faces that chew baccy, spit, sneer at the barkeep, laugh as a recently dispatched corpse twitches under their gaze. Two of these fairly formulaic Spaghettis capture Van Cleef in all his nostril-flaring, mad-eyed glory: and though they don't match up to those two incredible Leone movies which are Cleef's abiding masterpieces (*For A Few Dollars More* and *The Good The Bad And The Ugly*), they're still a great glimpse of one of cinema's most underrated stock players in action.

The *Sabata* movies were directed by Gianfranco Parolini (who, fearful of American weariness of Spaghettis, changes his name to Frank Kramer on the credits), and they're directed terribly. What saves these films is the casting – like Leone, he's somehow unearthed a whole cavalcade of grotesques for extras and support – and the action sequences.

Here, Parolini shows a deft, stylised touch that owes a lot to Leone and Damiano Damiani (*A Bullet For The General*), but speeds all their techniques up with startling ease. If anything, the preposterousness of the gun play (shooting dice in mid-flight, replugging holes in a bucket) anticipates the frenetic comedy of Sam Raimi or Ringo Lam; and Van Cleef chews it all up with just the right amount of awareness and brio (Yul Brynner in the second movie of the series is less fun).

And *The Return Of Sabata* is a great late Spaghetti, easily up there with Leone's underrated *Duck, You Sucker* or the last couple of Django movies: a film aware that its form is dying and desperate to reinvigorate it in any way it can (the ending's not just an eye-popper but a brain-melter).

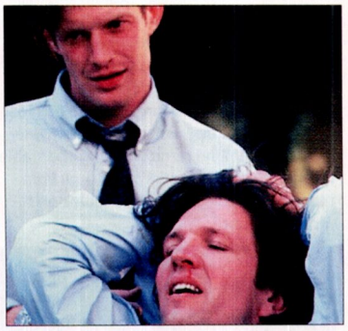
Good fun all round, and of course Van Cleef burns. He's a goddamn insect.

Neil Kulkarni

Deep Crimson
(Tartan Video, £14.99) ★★
BASED on the same murder case as Leonard Kastle's *The Honeymoon Killers*, this is a tale of obsession and treachery, Mexican-style. Well acted and embellished with some welcome macabre humour – but ultimately rather unsatisfying – it seems unable to decide whether to be a black comedy or a thriller.

The Frighteners
(CIC, £10.99) ★★
A LONG way from his adventurous low-budget punk-horror comedies, *Bad Taste* and *Meet The Feebles*, New Zealander Peter Jackson loses the plot spectacularly with this effects-driven fable about psychic ghostbuster Michael J Fox battling a serial killer risen from the dead.

Carla's Song
(PolyGram, £12.99) ★★★
KEN Loach's latest sees Robert Carlyle's Scottish bus driver falling for Nicaraguan refugee Oyanka Cabezas and following her from the urban sprawl of Glasgow toon to Nicaragua. A well-intentioned drama given extra clout thanks to another fine performance from Big Bad Bobby C.



Hollow Reed
(Film Four, £14.99) ★★
IN high-income Bath, a gay Doctor (Martin Donovan) and his lover (Ian Hart) battle for custody of his mistreated child from his ex-wife and her blokey lover. Realistic and morally inflammable, but brought down by a niggling Englishness and the horrific, histrionic Joely Richardson as a deluded mother.

Dolomite
(Xenon, £12.99) ★★★
A BLAXPLOITATION contemporary of *Boogie Nights*' Brock Landers, *Dolomite* struts the streets of 1975 LA, karate-kicking corrupt cops, feeding his gargantuan sex drive and reading jive poetry to his brothers. Marvel at the unwitting brilliance of lines like, "You've got 24 hours to get out of here – and 23 of them have already gone."

Reviews by Michael Bonner, Tom Cox, Stephen Dalton, Peter Hogan, Robert McTaggart and Chris Roberts

Unreleased: the Archie's

THE CARY GRANT COLLECTION:

Bringing Up Baby
Directed by **Howard Hawks**
Starring **Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn**
★★★★★

The Grass Is Greener
Directed by **Stanley Donen**
Starring **Cary Grant, Robert Mitchum, Deborah Kerr**
★★★★

That Touch Of Mink
Directed by **Delbert Mann**
Starring **Cary Grant, Doris Day**
★★★

Indiscreet
Directed by **Stanley Donen**
Starring **Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman**
★★★★

(All Front/PolyGram, £5.99 each)

PERHAPS the most startling passage in David Thomson's *A Biographical Dictionary Of Film* is one regarding Cary Grant: "There is a major but very difficult realisation that needs to be reached about Grant . . . as well as being a leading box-office draw for 30 years, he was the best and most important actor in the history of cinema."

This is high praise from an unfrivolous source, justified by Grant's being "attractive and unattractive simultaneously; there is a light and dark side to him". Whether the women who swooned at his image analysed it thus is debatable, but certainly the sly, charming Archibald Leach subtly stretched himself, from Hitchcock to Hawks and all points between.

The Cary Grant Collection, lovingly packaged, consists of 19 of his films, six available for the first time on video.

Bringing Up Baby is *the* masterwork of screwball comedy, where Hepburn causes zoologist Grant to lose a dinosaur bone, a pet leopard, and finally his heart. The plot wantonly contrives to deck him out in a negligée: "I just decided to go gay all of a sudden!" Somehow, he manages to be suave, dopey, nerdy and sexy, all within 102 marvellous minutes.

The Grass Is Greener is a would-be racy 1960 sex comedy, which throws Grant, Mitchum, Kerr and Jean Simmons into a "four-sided triangle" and asks Kerr to declare, "I am not a promiscuous trollop!" The women describe Grant as "a brute", and he delivers his plum lies with gusto: "He's given her a mink coat?? Well, *blast* him, I hope he rots in hell." Old Cary, he shoots from the hip.

Indiscreet is a better-known Donen light romance, with Grant's diplomat falling for theatre star Bergman, who thinks he's married although he isn't. "How dare he make love to me – and not be a married man!" The original trailer included here is priceless: "What happens is . . . well, let's just say it's the most delightful motion picture you've seen in a long time! It's the picture of happiness – and the pleasure is indescribable!" Now that's a pitch.

***Indiscreet*: 'How dare he make love to me – and not be a married man!'**

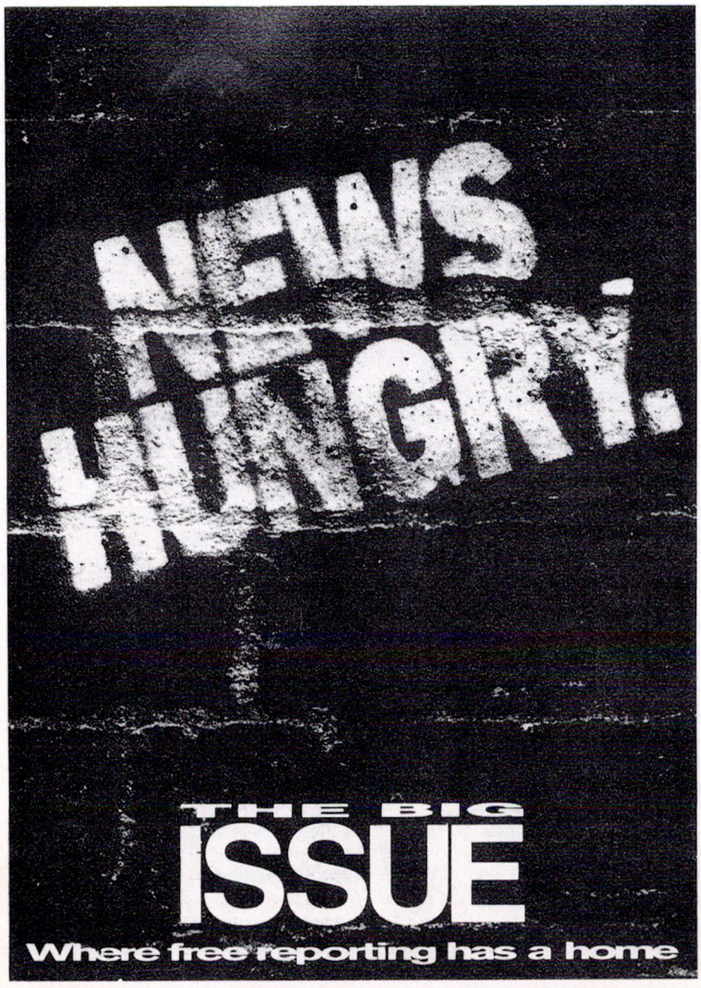
Then there's the disturbingly erotic *A Touch Of Mink*, where our man woos "innocent" Doris Day. "Yes!" hollers the trailer. "The gags come tumbling after one another in riotous profusion!" Top that!

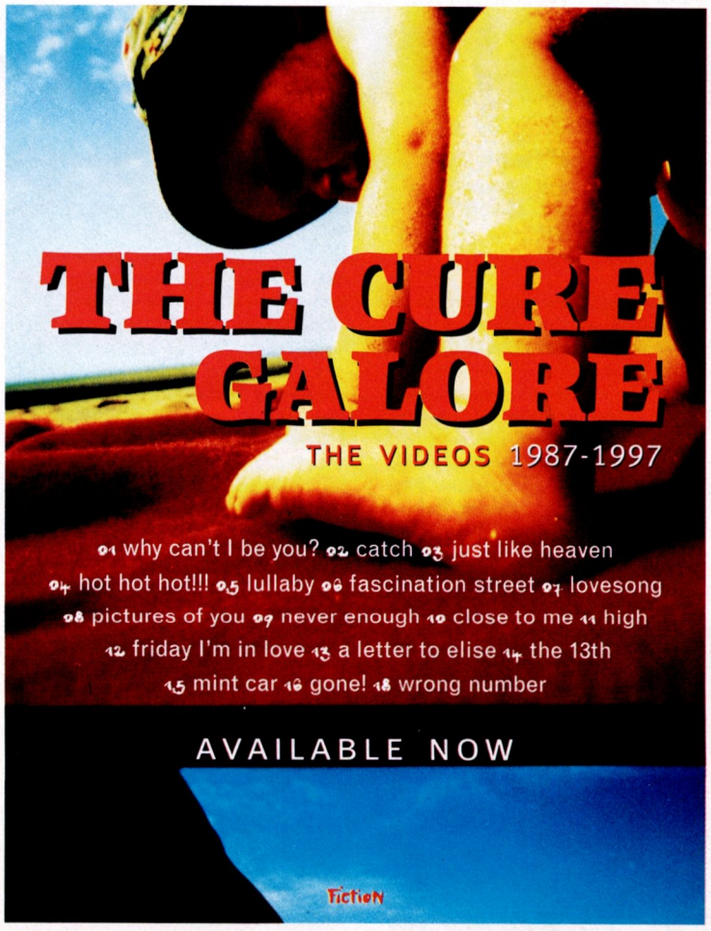
The collection also includes Odets' *None But The Lonely Heart*, where Grant plays a "shiftless, embittered Cockney who drifts towards a life of crime". There's the daft *Father Goose* with Leslie Caron, George Stevens' *Penny Serenade*, *Operation Petticoat*, his hint of dementia in Hitchcock's *Suspicion*, *Gunga Din*, *My Favourite Wife* . . . starting to read like a history of cinema, isn't it?

Grant was so cool he could play the fool in half his movies. In the other half, he effortlessly plays God.

Cary's *on*.

Chris Roberts





Grosse Pointe Blank: an ultra-smart, cucumber-cool, genre-teaser

Happiness is a warm gun

Grosse Pointe Blank

Directed by **George Armitage**
Starring **John Cusack, Minnie Driver, Dan Aykroyd**
(Touchstone Video)
★★★★

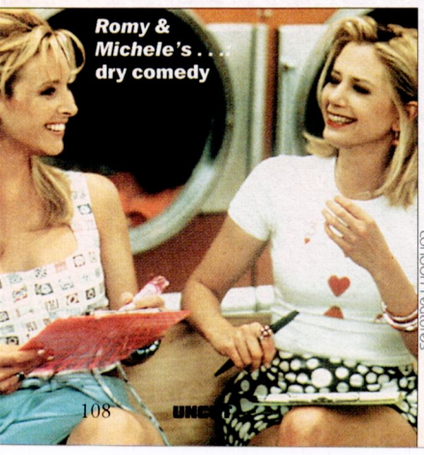
THERE'S an alert thoughtfulness about John Cusack, a quality few actors of his generation can muster. When you see him in key scenes here – driving his increasingly distracted psychiatrist (Alan Arkin) to the brink of hysteria, coolly evaluating his role as an international hitman or sizing up the present day position of his old hometown pals – he's one step ahead of the game.

This makes him the perfect lynchpin for *Grosse Pointe Blank*, an ultra-smart, cucumber-cool, genre-teasing film which provides a barbed commentary on the American way of life (and death). Existing in the hyper reality of made for TV violence, *GPB* stars Cusack as Martin Q, a successful but unfulfilled hitman with a serious case of existential blues. Hunted by fellow hitman the Grocer (the increasingly redundant Dan Aykroyd, thankfully relegated to a minor role), he decides to go back to his hometown high school reunion and the girl he left behind (Minnie Driver as a Eighties-besotted local DJ – who is every bit Martin's physical and intellectual equal).

Martin never seems to associate his job with his feeling of depression. Indeed, life in Grosse Pointe – where they pop pills to keep up their spirits, disguise all pervading paranoia with false manic grins, or get so lost in noisy video game shoot-outs they can't see the real thing going on around them – suggests spiritual malaise is a universal thing.

Taking his uniquely angled journey into the soulless heart of modern America at a sprightly, leisurely pace, director Armitage often allows the plot to go off in a lateral fashion allowing us to hang out with some of the stranger products of life in the suburban nether land (the face-off between the housing estate security guard and the real estate guy is a classic). The film's hallmarked by a constant playfulness, arch references to cinematic trends and several shifts in tone, all of which left reviewers puzzled and audiences confused in the States. Which misses the point completely. Apart from its overplayed finale, it's the tart ironic tone that makes *Grosse Pointe Blank* the hitman movie that outshoots and outsmarts all the competition.

Gavin Martin



Romy & Michele's . . . dry comedy

London Features

Romy & Michele's High School Reunion

(Touchstone Home Video)
★★★★

MUCH-MALIGNED, actually exceedingly dry comedy with dumber-than-dumb blondes Lisa Kudrow and Mira Sorvino sashaying from all things pink to learning to think.

Their dance routines are of the highest comic order, as is the timing throughout (especially in one scene where Mira's car won't start and Lisa pretends not to be dismayed).

Preferred by gentlemen.

Weapons Of Mass Distraction

(Entertainment In Video) ★★

BEN Kingsley and Gabriel Byrne are well-dressed, smirking businessmen who inhabit very tall office blocks designed by glass-fetishist architects. Their rivalry leads to escalating psychological warfare and dirty-trick duels, enlivened only by a blonde starlet in fascinatingly expensive lingerie. That her image decorates the box, front and back, should be enough to warn you that this is a misfiring plodder.

The Boy From Mercury

(Blue Dolphin) ★★★

ANOTHER "funny and touching" remembrance of growing up in Sixties Dublin? Paddy Clarke has much to answer for. This avoids the clichés, however, with young James Hickey deciding he's the next Flash Gordon, and encouraged by veteran kitchen-sink maestros Tom Courtenay and Rita Tushingham. And a fluffy dog.

The Chamber

(CIC) ★★

A SOLID John Grisham novel, a heavyweight pairing of Gene Hackman and Chris

O'Donnell, a meaty moral dilemma – the death penalty – yet journeyman director James Foley still ends up with a dodo on his hands. Hackman towers over the film as an unrepentant Southern racist rotting away on Death Row, but he's ill-served by ponderous plotting and a gallery of one-dimensional supporting players.

Evidence, perhaps, that the golden Grisham formula is starting to flag.

Spawn
(Entertainment In Video) ★

JAI Michael White stars as Todd McFarlane's comic book hero, a dead government assassin who does a deal with the Devil, returning from the grave hideously disfigured but with supernatural powers. John Leguizamo is his disgusting demon-clown opponent, with Martin Sheen as a corrupt CIA boss happily planning the apocalypse, while Nicol Williamson wanders about being mysterious and profound. The special effects are truly amazing, and – in this Cert 18 "Director's cut" version – pretty gruesome, but the editing is terrible and so is the script.

Bean
(PolyGram) ★

ROWAN Atkinson's sporadically funny comic creation gets the big screen treatment, reunited with old *Not The Nine O'Clock News* pal Mel Smith in the director's chair. Bean goes to La-La-Land and has all sorts of allegedly amusing, Jacques Tati-style incidents. None of which are remotely funny.

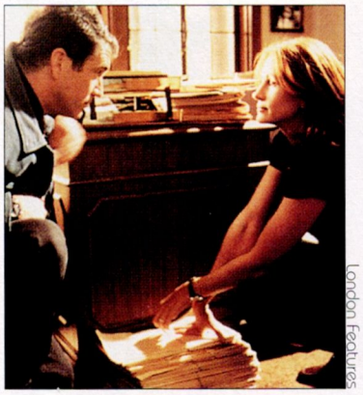
Mandela And De Klerk
(Entertainment In Video) ★ ★

PART docu-drama and part heavyweight soap, this TV movie account of Mandela's release from jail and immediate rise to power in South Africa stars Sydney Poitier as the ANC leader and Michael Caine as his chrome-domed, nemesis-turned-saviour, FW de Klerk. Surprisingly, perhaps, it is Caine who acquits himself most convincingly with a passable accent and plenty of subtle emotional fireworks while Poitier hams it up royally with ponderous theatrical gravitas.

Despite being filmed in Cape Town and spliced with real news footage, the whole production has the glossy deadness of all made-for-TV issue movies.

Addicted To Love
(Warner Home Video) ★ ★

MEG Ryan and the increasingly sensible Matthew Broderick play the jilted saddos spying on their co-habiting exes. You've probably guessed the rest already. Be prepared for oodles of formulaic romance, a script that promises to be funny but isn't, and a concluding "message" based on an episode of *Lassie*. Eeeuugh.



London Features

Conspiracy Theory
(Warner Home Video) ★ ★

THIS reunites Mel Gibson with his career-saving *Lethal Weapon* mentors, Joel Silver and Richard Donner, but this time around they've done their Aussie chum no favours whatsoever, ruining script-writer Brian Helgeland's clever central idea with their typically overblown, explosive-ridden treatment. Mel's OK as the sub Travis Bickle, conspiracy-obsessed cabbie, but Donner's final cut ties up each of the discordant loose ends that, left intact, could have made this movie a far darker, more disturbing experience.

Career Girls
(Film Four) ★ ★ ★

MIKE Leigh's famously strict characterisation methods misfire badly in this slight two-hander about a decade-spanning female friendship which survives student angst, romantic disappointment and dashed ambition. Lynda Steadman and Katrin Cartlidge provide nothing but theatrical tics and exaggerated mannerisms at first, although the style soon settles down, and a bruised tenderness eventually shines through.

Some choice comic moments, but hardly an auspicious follow-up to *Secrets And Lies*.

Speed 2: Cruise Control
(Fox Home Entertainment) ★

IF there was ever an unnecessary action sequel, this is it.

Deprived of original star Keanu Reeves, Dutch nutter Jan De Bont teams Sandra Bullock with Jason Patric and substitutes a fast-moving, out-of-control bus with a huge, ponderous ocean liner. Willem Dafoe tries his best as the snarling bad guy with copper-poisoned blood, but this is a lame, underscripted mess which reveals the vapid truth behind De Bont's recent standing as Hollywood's premier action director.

Reviews by Michael Bonner, Stephen Dalton, Chris Roberts and Andrew Sumner

Men In Black: slick, odd-couple comedy

Dark stardom

Men In Black
Directed by **Barry Sonnenfeld**
Starring **Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones, Linda Fiorentino, Rip Torn**
(Columbia TriStar)
★ ★ ★ ★

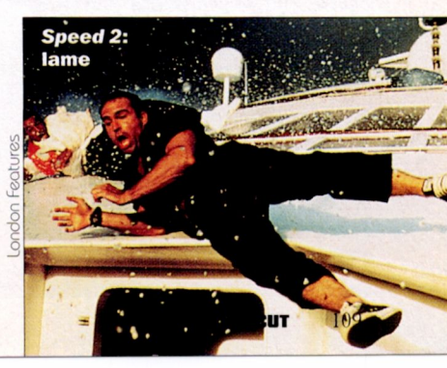
IT was inevitable that the hipper side of Hollywood would eventually get sick of *X Files* conspiracy mania and give the Nineties' extra-terrestrial revival a satirical slant. Thus the starting point of Barry Sonnenfeld's knowing sci-fi comedy is that not only are aliens among us, but that they are routinely monitored by a secret US government immigration agency: the "men in black" of popular UFO folklore. The punchline is that most intergalactic visitors have settled in New York City, where they fit in just fine.

***Men In Black* is part disco remix of *Independence Day* and part cutting-edge, monster-effects orgy, but mostly a slick, odd-couple comedy. In this, the casting is right on the money, with Smith and Jones striking the ultimate demographic-busting dream team partnership for the mid-Nineties. Squeezed into smooth black suits and shades, their deadpan interplay is more Jake and Elwood Blues than Mulder and Scully. Linda Fiorentino is somewhat underused as a forensic scientist unwittingly dragged into the invasion plot, but the great Rip Torn – aka Artie from *The Larry Sanders Show* – turns in a sharp, steroid-pumped cameo as head of alien immigration.**

Where *Independence Day* was almost absurdly sincere and *Mars Attacks!* drowned in painfully ironic kitsch, *Men In Black* walks a fine line between sassy comedy and creature-feature tension. While its light-hearted tone makes it hard to accept that the Earth is ever truly in jeopardy from hostile invaders, the screwball jokes and deft action set-pieces never allow our attention to flag. Sonnenfeld directs with the same spring-heeled stealth which made his *Get Shorty* such an easy-going blast, shrink-wrapping the blockbuster format down to an easily digestible 90-odd minutes.

Indeed, if anything, *Men In Black* leaves you hungry for more.

Stephen Dalton



Speed 2: lame

London Features

***Looking After Jojo*: smartly edited, striking juxtapositions, quickfire pace**

The road to Carlyle

Looking After Jojo

Directed by **John MacKenzie**
Starring **Robert Carlyle, Jenny McCrindle**
(BBC Worldwide, £14.99)
★★★★★

IF Robert Carlyle has put even a footstep wrong in his career to date, I blinked and missed it. Exploding into the national consciousness as the deranged Albie in *Cracker*, slipping gently into the uniform of pot-smoking PC *Hamish Macbeth*, and finally throwing his clothes away altogether to dazzle cinema audiences in *The Full Monty*, he has brought with each of these contrasting performances a full and remarkable persuasion.

He is poor Hamish, heartbroken over the death of his beloved terrier, Wee Jock. And he's equally convincing as smack-starved Jojo, shooting his girlfriend's dog dead – for barking – while he wrecks the room in a desperate search for a missing wrap.

Looking After Jojo finds Carlyle, again, on the wrong side of the law, a cocky and ambitious Edinburgh gangster whose lust for money leads to drug-dealing, heroin addiction and a final, brutal chain of events that spills shocking secrets and a lot of blood. Drugs? Scotland? Yes, it sounds familiar, probably *passé*, but this straight-from-TV-to-video four-parter earns its place in the world of drama by virtue of just about everything.

Carlyle's mesmerising, ruthless presence is informed by a first-class script full of unusual and finely-drawn characters and situations and a fine supporting cast. Jenny McCrindle earns our every sympathy as dreamy, dizzy blonde Lorraine, who only ever wanted to be a Marilyn Monroe lookalike but who settles instead for Jojo. Her scared, naive but determined character, fighting an unequal battle to save her man, makes for scenes of vivid contrast as the nightmare descends upon the concrete blocks of home.

Jojo surrounds himself with men he can manipulate. They are flash, stupid or very stupid – "calendar material", smackhead gofers. But the female roles across the series are meatier, particularly within Jojo's family – a unit which appears closely bound through the usual criminal, working-class loves and loyalties but which is festering, barely below the flesh, with resentment and deception and ancient torment. Ellie Haddington (last famously seen as mad Don Brennan's girlfriend, Josie, on *Coronation Street*) turns in a crucially understated portrayal of matriarch May McCann, holding her tongue at least until she's had a few drinks or a little provocation.

And it's all set against a well-observed Eighties backdrop, a time when Thatcher was governing, Aids was rising, Guinness was 70p a pint and people were listening to old and new records by The Jam, Costello, The Stranglers, The Clash, Blondie, Status Quo and . . . uh, Bucks Fizz!

Smartly edited with striking juxtapositions and a quickfire pace, these 200 minutes fly past like half an hour.

Looking After Jojo . . . it's a rush.

Carol Clerk

Star Trek: Voyager 4.1

(CIC video, £13.99)
★★★★

THIS tape resolves the *Series 3* cliffhanger, which left Captain Janeway and her crew forced into an uneasy alliance with old adversaries the Borg collective against the malevolent Species 8472 – giant insectoid killing machines whose only goal is to purge our universe of all life in order to protect their own genetic integrity. Voyager's holographic doctor has developed specially programmed nanomachines which are the only defence against Species 8472, and the crew will hand over the technology to the collective in exchange for safe passage through Borg space.

But they fail to take into account just how ruthless the Borg are, and before you can say "Whoops, there's a hull breach in sector 6," they're being plunged by a Borg interloper into a parallel universe consisting of liquid matter, home to Species 8472 . . .

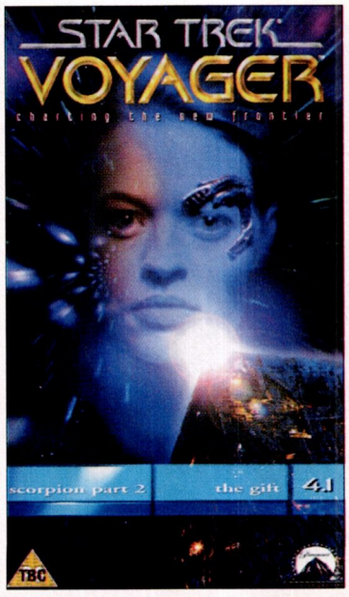
The third spin-off from the original series may not have the benefit of Captain Picard's charisma or Data's charm from *Next Generation*, but its a million light years better than the increasingly stagnant *Deep Space Nine*.

That the crew of Voyager are trying to find their way back to Earth after being flung halfway across the galaxy provides necessary dramatic momentum, and while Captain Janeway's grating, sub-Katharine Hepburn drawl is no closer to improving, the show is rapidly turning into a sleek, well-groomed action series, dazzling the viewer with its breakneck pace and increasingly elaborate set-piece battles (particularly the full-on assault on the Borg cubes here).

The second story, in which the squeaky clean Kes is transformed into pure energy (no, really), and leaves the show, is a bit of an airy-fairy damp squib after the Borg shenanigans, but if you take into account the arrival on board Voyager of new cast member Jeri Ryan (last seen fighting more aliens in *Dark Skies*) as liberated Borg Seven Of Nine – a move which well and truly throws the cat among the pigeons – you've got what, *Third Rock From The Sun* aside, is the best science fiction show on the box.

Beam us up, Scotty, you cantankerous old Scottish sod.

Michael Bonner



The hairy Tyler floor show

Steven Tyler of Aerosmith: mouth and no trousers

Roy Tee/SIN

Aerosmith: Live Texas Jam '78

(Sony Music Video, £5.99) ★

NOW, of course, Aerosmith, approaching their fifties, are cleaned up, on the wagon, drug-free exponents of the healthy Californian lifestyle. But back in the late-Seventies, when this live video was filmed, they were the living embodiment of *Spinal Tap* and the American rock'n'roll dream.

Aerosmith's was a life of cocaine, opium, groupies, arriving at gigs in helicopters, cocaine, tight leather trousers, dope, Learjets, car crashes, mysterious housefires, cocaine, onstage tantrums, offstage fights, trashed hotel rooms and more cocaine. Presented with an exercise bike back then, they would sooner have thrown it out of a hotel window than ride it.

Yet, despite all their hedonistic excess, this was also a time in their history when they sounded like a two-bit boogie woogie band with Doors pretensions. Here, performing in front of 150,000 cap-sleeved Texans in a vast football stadium, they plod through long forgotten piddle like "Lord Of The Thighs", "Uncle Salty" and "Walkin' The Dog" – all God-awful. The only decent riff-tastic moment comes with "Walk This Way", in its original form sounding half the behemoth it was to become a few years later when Run DMC reworked it and gave heavy rock momentary, cross-cultural cred.

Bereft of stage pyrotechnics (the nearest they get here is a plant – yes, a plant – at the back of the stage) and soft (cock) rock anthems that would mark their later career, Steven Tyler, with his cheeks still intact, looks decidedly pissed-off – after the gig, he reportedly hurled a crate of Tropicana through the window of the band's coach. And Joe Perry, with just his nose visible through a cascading poodle perm, only seems interested when he gets to use his new toy, a Vocoder which makes him sound like one of those "for mash get Smash" robots. Still, this was the Seventies, after all!

For further technological crapness, check out the video director's attempts at special effects, as we are treated to a fantastical overlay of the band performing, overlaid with fireworks, overlaid with an excitable female on top of someone's shoulders, baring her ample boobies.

With the disco phenomena and the punk revolution in full swing elsewhere on planet Seventies, this video is an example of just how sad mainstream rock had become. No wonder they needed so much coke!

Johnny Dee

Idols

Brit Awards '98

(Warner Vision, £14.99) ★★★

THE Brits – from the high farce of Fox'n' Fleetwood, through The KLF's sheep-whacking valediction, to Mrs Merton paging a certain mister Charlie last year ("Everybody's asking after him back stage") – have always been an occasion for industry back-slapping, never really an accurate gauge of musical developments.

The *Brits '98* video, accordingly, showcases the shiniest, happiest videos of '97 rather than the essential bands – there's no Verve, Radiohead or Cornershop here. But there are 43 promos ranging across the spectrum of this year's video styles, from the tacky Athena poster clichés of Robbie Williams' "Angel" to the state-of-the-art cyber-Gotham apocalypso of "Spice Up Your Life". If you enjoy the recent tendency towards storyboarded mini-movies, Oasis and Roni Size oblige with high-concept vignettes for "Stand By Me" and "Brown Paper Bag". If, on the other hand, you preferred the good old days when bands just played the song while dangling from strings, The Eels' "Novocaine For The Soul" should do nicely.

A word of warning, though: watch the entire 90 minutes in one go and risk the disorienting fug that is Slow Motion Sickness. Sadly, pop video directors have still not figured out how to make their cameras roll at the right speed. Something you need to work on before the Brits '99, guys – might I suggest a word with Hanson, whose terrifying hyperactivity and Monkees-aping antics for "Mmmbop" appear to have been aided by a cocktail of PCP and tartrazine?

Simon Lewis

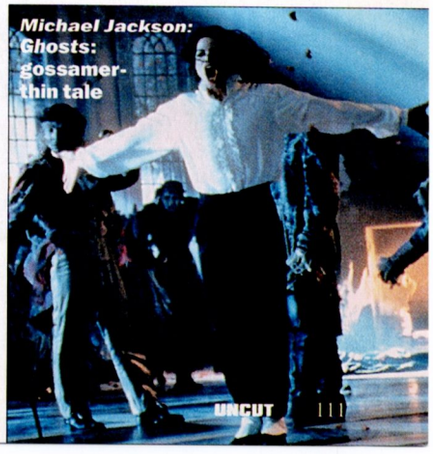
Michael Jackson: Ghosts

(SMV Enterprises, £10.99) ★★★

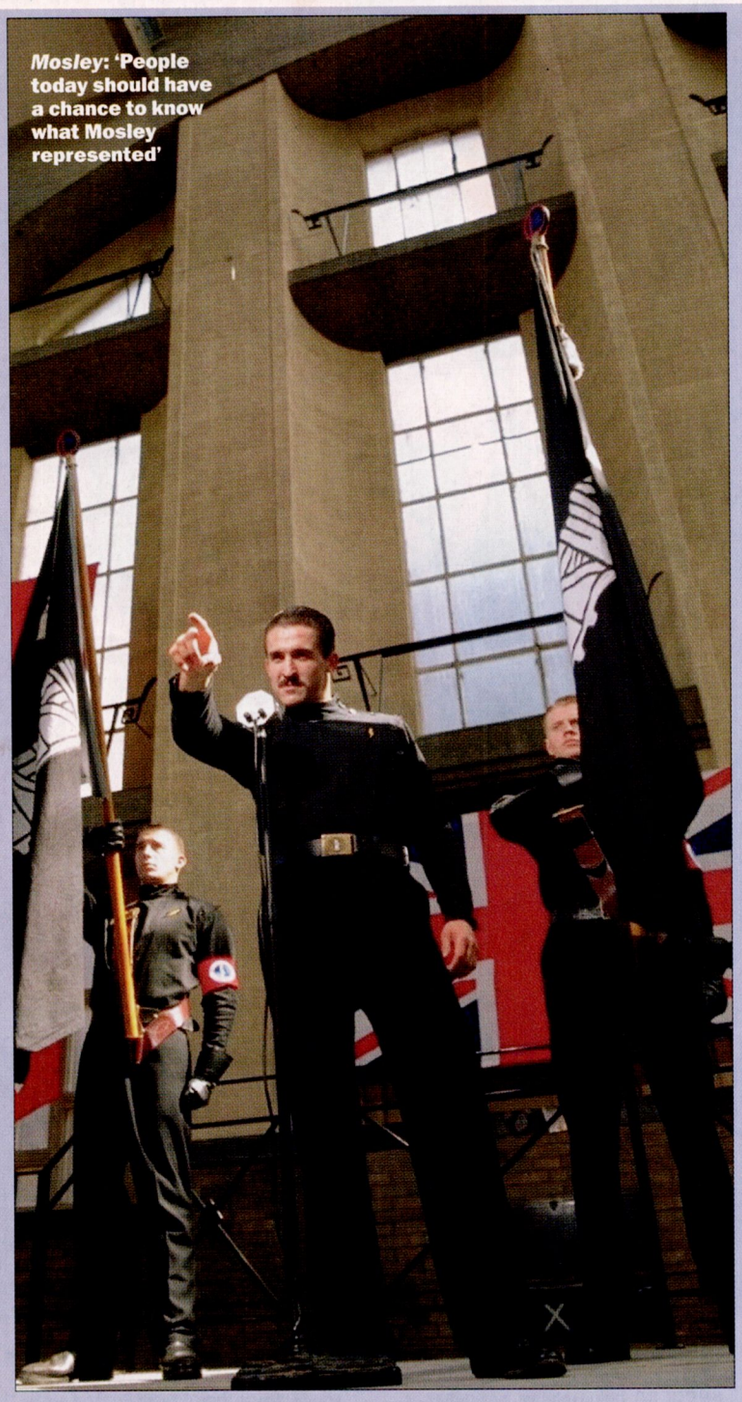
SUCCESS, being relative, has rather distorted one's perception of Michael Jackson in the late-Nineties, casting him as – get this – a failure, playing to an ever-diminishing audience. Not bad for an artist whose recent album, *Blood On The Dancefloor – History In The Mix*, sold several million copies and spawned numerous hit singles (two of which, "Is It Scary?" and the title track, are included here).

Ghosts, the video to (belatedly) accompany the LP, is a mini-musical in the mould of Jackson's *Thriller*. Premiered at the '97 Cannes Film Festival and directed by Stan Winston (whose character designs in *Jurassic Park*, *The Terminator*, *Aliens* and *Edward Scissorhands* won him four Academy Awards), it features the sort of gravity-defying aerobics and special FX we've come to expect from a man-child with Jackson's extraordinarily flexible body – and bank account. A gossamer-thin tale about a mysterious creature ostracised from normal society (ah, that'll be Michael Jackson, then) and forced to spend his days in a castle lest his eccentric appearance and behaviour frighten the local kiddies, *Ghosts* is, as allegories go, less complex even than *Edward Scissorhands*. The singer's fascination for the Elephant Man – for Jackson, the ultimate outsider – betrays an alienation with which nobody alive today can truly empathise. Because nobody on Earth today is that rich, that famous, that simultaneously tormented and talented. No wonder he's such a fast mover.

Paul Lester



Michael Jackson: Ghosts: gossamer-thin tale



Mosley: 'People today should have a chance to know what Mosley represented'

Sitcom co-writer LAURENCE MARKS and producer IRVING TITELBAUM talk to Stephen Dalton about *Mosley*, their new TV drama which outs the British black-shirts

"MOST Jewish people grow up with this mythological monster called Mosley that you frighten children with," says Laurence Marks, co-writer of a new four-part drama about Thirties Britain's notorious would-be fascist leader. "But actually we wanted to know more about him . . ."

Hence *Mosley*, the solid and intelligent new four-hour series written by Marks and Maurice Gran, which blows the lid off a shameful chapter in history when the British aristocracy developed an unhealthy fondness for full-blown fascism.

Best known for sit-coms such as *The New Statesman* and *Birds Of A Feather*, Marks and Gran have diversified into heavyweight biography with immense assurance. And, despite their Jewish roots, the duo have resisted any temptation to trash the anti-Semitic demagogue with politically correct hindsight. As embodied by dapper smoothie Jonathan Cake, Mosley is faithfully presented as a complex, charismatic, extremely gifted idealist. Nor have his ample sexual exploits – seducing almost every upper-class woman of his generation – been whitewashed either.

"Mosley was a glamorous character. He was young, handsome, wealthy. He had many mistresses and followers. We would be dishonest if we pretended he wasn't a considerable charmer when he chose to be," insists Gran.

"Mosley was glamorous just as Macbeth is glamorous. His story is a sort of Shakespearean tragedy, someone who is brought low by an overwhelming flaw. His selfishness and disloyalty in his private life was a precursor to his behaviour in public life. The way he treated his wife and women in general was just an echo of the way he treated the world."

Spurred into political action by the horrors of World War One, Thomas Oswald Mosley served as both a Tory and Labour MP before growing disgusted with Westminster's impotent old guard. His solution was to found his own political party, the British Union Of Fascists, in 1931. He promised "a complete revision of parliament to change it from a talk-shop to a workshop" which would "harness modern machinery and ask for a mobilisation of energy, vitality and manhood to serve the nation".

Although his black-shirted thugs terrorised inner-city Britain, Mosley's crusade was ultimately an almighty failure. The BUF never won a single council or parliamentary seat, while most of their mass rallies ended in them taking hefty beatings from anti-fascist protesters.

Their most resounding defeat was the infamous Cable Street riot of October, 1936, in which 80 people were injured and 84 arrested. After facing the righteous wrath of 100,000 hostile Londoners, Mosley was forced to concede he would never be Britain's answer to his beloved role model (and one-time BUF paymaster) Mussolini.

In 1940, he was interned for three years as a potential wartime traitor. Harsh treatment? Perhaps, but this was a man, after all, whose second marriage was attended by both Hitler and Goebbels.

After the war, aside from a doomed comeback attempt in the early Sixties, Mosley spent his twilight years in exile in France and was largely a forgotten figure when he died in 1980.

"The ideas he stood for are not dead and buried," insists the drama's producer, Irving Titelbaum, who once fought successfully to prevent Mosley from addressing his student union.

Indeed, in our age of collapsing superpowers and ethnic cleansing, Mosley's hate-filled rhetoric sounds appallingly topical.

"There are people around now who believe in exactly the same things – they're still trying to raise the same issues," nods Titelbaum. "We should have a chance to know what Mosley represented.

"We know what fascism caused in the Second World War. In case we forget, we should know what it stood for: not just anti-Semitism, but dictatorship and brutality."

Mosley begins on Channel Four on Thursday, February 12

IT'S A CULT THING
(C4, FRIDAYS FROM FEBRUARY 6)

film New season of late-nite cult movies kicking off with *The Witches*, Nic Roeg's nightmarish take on Roald Dahl's twisted children's book starring Anjelica Huston. Later films in the run include *Curse Of The Demon* and *The Devil Rides Out*.

FRIDAY NIGHT, SATURDAY NIGHT
(ITV, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6)

More lurid tabloid TV as cameras follow the youngsters of Britain getting pissed, wasted, shagged and arrested over a routine party weekend.

THE CABLE GUY
(SATELLITE PREMIERE, SKY SCREEN ONE, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6)

film Flawed but compelling collision of Jim Carrey's hyperactive comedy with director Ben Stiller's downbeat satirical vision. Carrey plays the eponymous cable TV installer driven to *Mr Bean*-style extremes by his own psychotic loneliness.

DIABOLIQUE
(SATELLITE PREMIERE, SKY SCREEN TWO, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7)

film Dismissed by critics as a pointless remake of the French love-triangle murder classic, but Sharon Stone and Isabel Adjani both acquit themselves well in stylish surroundings.

FITZ
(ITV, MONDAYS FROM FEBRUARY 9)

Jimmy McGovern calls it "US imperialism gone mad", but America's faithfully downbeat adaptation of *Cracker* has been sold back to ITV. It's not too bad either, with a gentle LA *noir* vibe, although the permanently scowling Robert Pastorelli lacks Coltrane's self-mocking charm.

PLEASURE BEACH
(BBC1, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9)

Yet another in the current rash of fly-on-the-pier documentaries, this time exposing the family-run seafront leisure park at Blackpool beach. Hotel on sea, anyone?

MILLENNIUM
(ITV, FRIDAYS FROM FEBRUARY 9)

Lance Henrickson returns as grizzled psychic investigator Frank Black in a second season of superior, and strikingly gory, murder thrillers from *X Files* creator Chris Carter.

BODY SNATCHERS
(C4, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10)

film Third remake of the classic alien-invasion fable, this time relocated to a US Army base and given a typically lurid psycho-sexual slant by the king of subtlety, Abel Ferrara.

BOB ROBERTS
(C4, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10)

Sour political parable written and directed by Tim Robbins, who stars as a right-wing US folk singer turned presidental hopeful. Sharp satire enlivened by sly allusions to DA Pennebaker's classic Dylan documentary, *Don't Look Back*.

BEFORE SUNRISE
(C4, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22)

Between his brilliant *Dazed And Confused* and his flawed *Suburbia*, Richard Linklater made this gently charming, talk-heavy Euro-romance starring Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy. A grunge generation *Brief Encounter*, including a magnificent tribute to *The Third Man*.

THIS MORNING WITH RICHARD NOT JUDY
(BBC2, SUNDAYS FROM FEBRUARY 15)

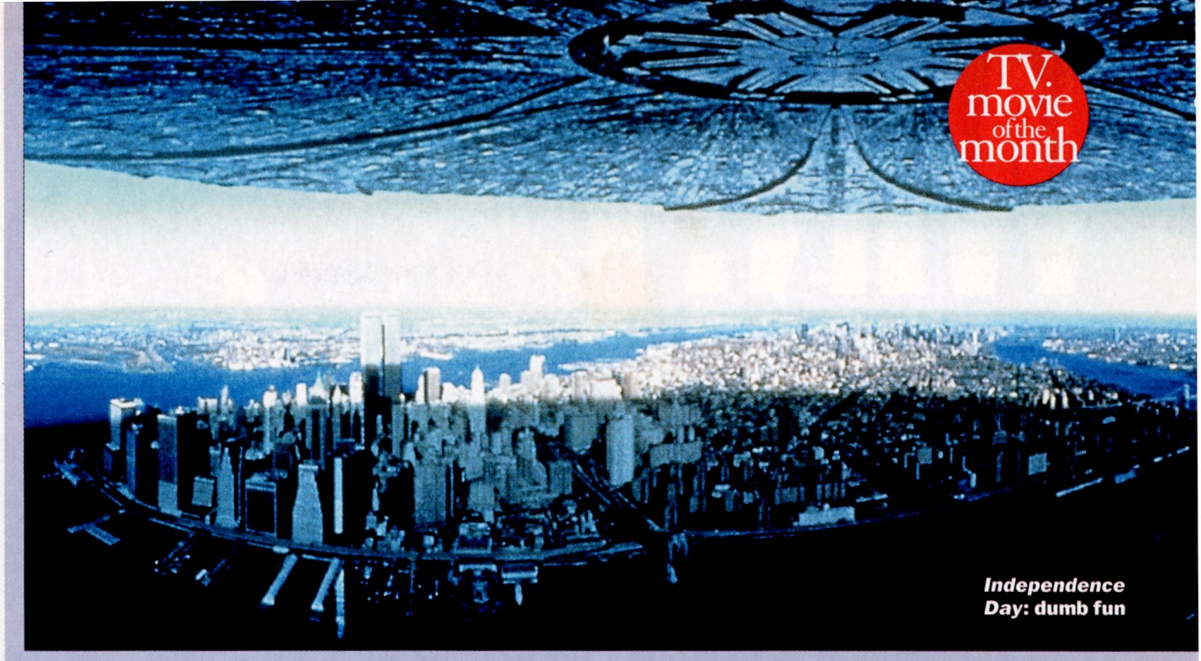
The latest bid for world comedy domination by *Fist Of Fun* stars Stewart Lee and Richard Herring, this time playing sofa-bound hosts in a live spoof of morning magazine shows. Potentially magnificent.

BAD TIMING
(BBC2, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15)

Dark Nic Roeg classic about sexual obsession, murder and espionage in late Seventies Vienna starring Art Garfunkel, Theresa Russell and Harvey Keitel. Enigmatic and beautifully filmed.

THE ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS
(BBC2, SUNDAYS FROM FEBRUARY 15)

An extended delve into the inner workings of showbiz, including backstage ligging at the Academy Awards, from the team who made *The Music Business*.



Independence Day: dumb fun

INDEPENDENCE DAY (SATELLITE PREMIERE) SKY SCREEN TWO, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Shamelessly old-fashioned, jarringly jingoistic, parodied to death in *Mars Attacks!* and *Men In Black* – and yet Roland Emmerich's bonkers, mega-budget saga of hostile space invaders remains as impervious to criticism as an alien mothership is to paltry human weaponry. Never mind a plot full of gaping black holes and Bill Pullman's cardboard cut-out of a US president, just fasten your seatbelt and allow the sheer scale, spectacle and stirring pomp of this decade's biggest box-office blockbuster to blast you into orbit. Dumb fun of galaxy-sized proportions.

IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU
(C4, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15)

Modern-day Capra-esque fable in which New York cop Nicolas Cage promises penniless waitress Bridget Fonda half his lottery winnings instead of a tip, much to the chagrin of his grasping wife, Rosie Perez. Mushy feelgood romance with great performances, especially Perez.

OCTOBER
(ITV, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19)

Stephen Tompkinson shakes off his *Ballykissangel* robes for good in this glossy, big-budget, Bond-style Euro-thriller. He plays the the unwitting victim of an experiment with sinister new mind-altering drugs. Sorted.

LET'S MAKE LOVE
(C4, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22)

Marilyn Monroe plays a Broadway hopeful falling for Yves Montand's smooth-talking publicist in George Cukor's velvet-lined romantic musical.

THE HOT SPOT
(C4, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24)

Dennis Hopper directs while Don Johnson sweats through a steamy *noir* thriller set in nocturnal New Orleans.

OF MICE AND MEN
(C4, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24)

Actor Gary Sinise directs this somewhat stagey update of Steinbeck's heart-tugging Depression classic, co-starring John Malkovich as the terrifyingly innocent monster, Lenny.

THE MORWENNA BANKS SHOW
(C5, TUESDAYS FROM FEBRUARY 25)

Fresh sketches and comic characters from former *Absolutely* and *Saturday Night Live* stalwart Banks.

EMPIRE RECORDS
(SATELLITE PREMIERE, SKY SCREEN TWO, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25)

Slight but likeable Generation X cash-in set in and around a hip record shop. Grunge on the soundtrack, Liv Tyler and the ace Parker Posey head up a young cast.

PREMIER PASSIONS
(BBC1, WEDNESDAYS FROM FEBRUARY 25)

Yes, another behind-the-showers documentary series, this time tracing an eventful year in which newly promoted Premier League giant-killers Sunderland attempt to become "the Arsenal of the North". Whatever that means.

IF I RULED THE WORLD
(BBC2, FRIDAYS FROM FEBRUARY 27)

An increasingly familiar quiz format from the Hat Trick stable finds Clive Anderson hosting while team captains Jeremy Hardy and ex-Goodie Graeme Garden play at being slimy, dishonest, evasive politicians for an evening.

KING OF THE HILL
(C4, FRIDAYS FROM FEBRUARY 27)

Yee-hah! The best animated comedy soap ever returns for a second, 22-show run. Already a ratings-busting success for America's Fox network, Mike Judge's affectionately comic homage to suburban Texas looks set to surpass his previous smash hit, *Beavis And Butt-Head*, in the cultural phenomenon stakes. And deservedly so.

PLATOON
(ITV, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28)

The first and goriest of Oliver Stone's 'Nam epics, a bloody saga of battlefield betrayal with little of the turbo-liberal hand-wringing which later became his hallmark.

ERASER
(SATELLITE PREMIERE, SKY SCREEN TWO, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28)

Arnie's clumsiest career glitch so far, a clunky 1995 throwback to his early Eighties action-pulp origins. But Vanessa Wiliams and the great James Caan pick up the slack.

THE LIFE AND CRIMES OF WILLIAM PALMER
(ITV, TUESDAYS FROM MARCH 3)

Two-part Victorian melodrama featuring the ever watchable Keith Allen in trademark charming-scumbag mode as a respectable smalltown doctor with a garden full of shallow graves. Naughty but nice.

All dates are correct at time of going to press.
Check national papers for exact transmission times.
Compiled by Stephen Dalton

HOW DO YOU WANT ME? (BBC2, Fridays from February 20)

Another seasoned sitcom veteran reveals his dark side as Simon Nye of *Men Behaving Badly* fame turns his hand to black comedy drama set in darkest Sussex. When volatile London newlyweds Ian (Dylan Moran) and Lisa (Charlotte Coleman) quit the big city and relocate to the rural village where she grew up, tensions between husband and family turn increasingly bitter. Essentially a sustained town-vs-country debate with a sinister undertow, this anti-*Archers* grit-com confirms Nye's dominance in the field of Brits behaving badly.

WIN!

WIN BEAUTIFUL GIRLS VIDEOS

SCOTT Rosenberg's third script is a classy little number. After the gangster homage of *Things To Do In Denver* . . . and the action romp of *Con Air*, he's written this absolute gem. A thoughtful, subdued story – with Tim Hutton returning to his home town to find nothing's changed since he left, and his mates are still idiots – it cruises between uproarious comedy and heart-breaking poignancy, with a cast including Matt Dillon, Uma Thurman, Rosie O'Donnell, Michael Rapaport and a dozen others.

In an ideal world, it would have been 1997's film of the year. High praise indeed, and if you want to find out if we're lying or not, we've got 10 copies of it on video for you to win.

For which 1980 film did Timothy Hutton receive an Oscar?

Was it: a) Ordinary People, b) The Shining, or c) Heaven's Gate?

Answers on Uma Thurman's smile to *Beautiful Girls* Comp at the address below.

WIN GROSSE POINTE BLANK VIDEOS

ANOTHER classic from last year gets its video release this month, so we've rustled up **10** copies for you, with a little help from Hollywood Pictures Home Video.

Grosse Pointe Blank sees John Cusack prove himself to be among the finest (and shrewdest) actors of his generation, as he plays Martin Q, a hitman who returns to his old home town of Grosse Pointe for a high school reunion. Along the way, we get Alan Arkin as his psychologist, Dan Aykroyd as a rival hitman, and Minnie Driver as his ex. Can't get much better than that.

Anyway, to win a copy of this fine film, just answer this question.

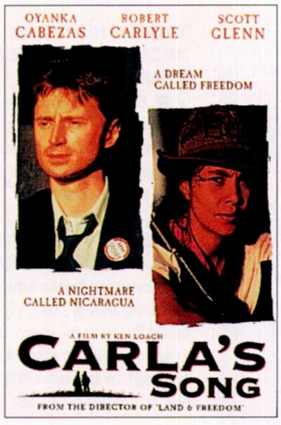
Which of these classic British TV comedy series did Minnie Driver *not* make an appearance in?

Was it: a) Brass Eye, b) The Day Today, or c) Knowing Me Knowing You With Alan Partridge?

Answers on Chris Morris' scathing wit to *Grosse Pointe Blank* Comp at the address below.

WIN CARLA'S SONG VIDEOS

BLAH blah Robert Carlyle, blah blah Ken Loach . . . *Carla's Song* sees one of our finest, most fearless actors team-up with his directorial equivalent for this moving tale of a Glaswegian bus driver who falls for a Nicaraguan refugee, ups sticks and follows her back to her troubled homeland.



No smack, no guns, just Carlyle's ferocious Method acting – this is a damn fine film, and we're pleased to have **10** copies of it to give away to you, courtesy of PolyGram video.

To win a copy, cast your mind back to an early Carlyle appearance in *Cracker* as the Liverpool Football Club obsessive, Albie, and tell us the name of the copper he killed?

Was it: a) DI Billborough, b) DS Penhaligon, or c) DS Beck?

Answers on Robbie Coltrane's girth to *Carla's Song* Comp at the address below.

WIN IN THE COMPANY OF MEN SCREENPLAYS

IN The Company Of Men is a savage satire which follows the exploits of recently dumped corporate executives Chad and Howard who decide to get their own back on women. They formulate a plan to this end, but unfortunately things go wrong and the situation descends into a deadly psychological battle of corporate and sexual one-upmanship. It won the Film-makers' Trophy at last year's Sundance Festival, in case you were asking.

We've got **10** copies of the screenplay, signed by writer/director Neil LaBute, and published by Faber & Faber, and **10** copies of the theatrical poster to give away. Just tell us who the male and female leads were in that other classic of corporate sexual intrigue, *Disclosure*.

Were they: a) Michael Douglas/Glenn Close, b) Demi Moore/Bruce Willis, or c) Michael Douglas/Demi Moore?

Answers on a camisole top to *In The Company Of Men* Comp at the address below.

Send your entries on a postcard (or on the back of a sealed envelope), to Uncut, 13th Floor, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London, SE1 9LS

ISSUE 8 COMPETITION WINNERS: BUMPER VIDEO SELECTION *Answer*: Bill Paxton **Winners**: Andrew Nutt, Belfast; Mark Lucas, Essex; Tony Nuttall, St Helens **BIG NIGHT VIDEOS** *Answer*: Richard Cross **Winners:** David Barraclough, Balham; Richard Butler, Kimbolton; John Parry, Cardiff; Peter Quinn, Derry; Stephanie Lunn, Bury; Richard Robinson, Islington; J Broder, Tyne And Wear; Eamonn Spelman, County Clare; Mike Davies, Portsmouth; Dan Goldthorp, Clapham **FIFTH ELEMENT VIDEOS** *Answer*: Leon **Winners:** Andrew Bove, Northampton; Steve Walker, Whitley Bay; Janet Laven, Everton; Grant Eves, Sudbury; Mark Causer, Swindon; Martin Trent, Erith; Zoe Van-de-Velde, Leicester; Ian Chapman, Luton; Troy Spencer, Havant; Chris Bowman, Ipswich **ALIEN BOX SET** *Answer*: The Sulaco **Winners:** Patrick Fleming, Kent; Mike Painter, Harrow; Anna Strange, London

Smith and Jones in *Men In Black*: 'Look, we'll shoot first and answer questions later, OK!'

As if it hadn't already made enough dosh at the cinema, *Men In Black* cleans up on video rentals this month. To win £100 worth of video vouchers, answer these easy questions about Messrs Smith & Jones' movie careers.

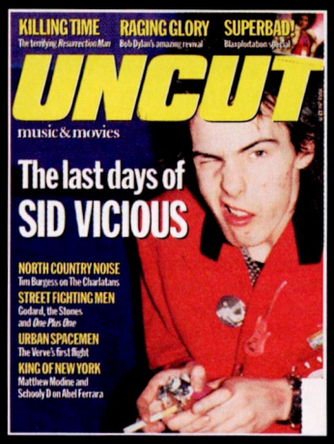
1. What was the name of the Tommy Lee Jones character in *The Fugitive*?
2. Who played the love interest in the Will Smith action flick, *Bad Boys*?
3. Which made-for-TV movie starred Tommy Lee Jones as Death Row murderer Gary Gilmore?
4. In which film did Will Smith play a con artist pretending to be Sidney Poitier's son?
5. Name three Oliver Stone movies which featured Tommy Lee Jones.

Send your answers – to the above five questions only – to Screen Test, Uncut Editorial, IPC Magazines, 13th Floor, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. Entries on a postcard, to reach us no later than February 20.

SCREEN TEST

Think you know your *Fourth Protocol* from your *Fifth Element?* Answers on page 117

1. Which is the only James Bond theme song to reach Number One in the UK singles chart?
2. Who made his screen debut playing Boo Radley in *To Kill A Mockingbird*?
3. In which comedy did *ER*'s Eriq LaSalle play Eddie Murphy's love rival?
4. In which courtroom drama did *ER*'s Noah Wyle play a marine?
5. What was the name of the kidnapped dolphin in *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*?
6. In which film did Martin Sheen kill Warren Oates?
7. In which film did Robert De Niro kill John Cleese?
8. In which film did Robert De Niro kill Bob Hoskins?
9. Who played a corpse in *The Big Chill*, although his footage ended up on the cutting-room floor?
10. Which films featured the following tag-lines on their posters?
a) "Watch out for that tree!"
b) "Fear can hold you prisoner. Hope can set you free"
c) "The name in laughter from the hereafter"
d) "The first casualty of war is innocence"
e) "His Majesty was all powerful and all knowing. But he wasn't quite all there"
11. In which film did Tom Jones appear as himself?
12. In which film did Carly Simon appear as herself?
13. In which film did Cher appear as herself?
14. Whose real name is Susan Tomaling?
15. Whose real name is Allen Konigsberg?
16. Whose real name was William Pratt?
17. What is the only sequel to have won an Oscar for Best Film?
18. In which film did Quentin Tarantino discuss the homoerotic undertones of *Top Gun*?
19. Name three films in which Kevin Kline co-stars with John Cleese.
20. Name four films in which Danny DeVito co-stars with Jack Nicholson.
21. Which cities provided the setting for the following movies?
a) *Twin Town*
b) *Face/Off*
c) *Ghostbusters*
d) *The Third Man*
e) *A Streetcar Named Desire*
22. What are the names of the characters played by Jim Carrey and Jeff Daniels in *Dumb & Dumber*?
23. What is the name of the DJ played by Robin Williams in *Good Morning Vietnam*?
24. What is Steve Martin's profession in *Roxanne*?
25. What is Burt Lancaster's profession in *Field Of Dreams*?



Editor **Allan Jones**
Art Editor **Norman McLeod**
Associate Editor (Music) **Paul Lester**
Associate Editor (Film) **Michael Bonner**
Precinct 13 Editor **Terry Staunton**
Contributing Editor **David Fricke**
Production Editor **Robin Allan**
Sub-Editor **Mick Meikleham**
Editorial Assistant **Simon Lewis**

Cover Image: **Bob Gruen/Star File**
Thanks this issue: **Paul Williams, Roy Carr, Andrew Sumner, Stephen Dalton, Ed 'The Inhaler' Grennan,** and **Maria Jefferis**

Editorial Enquiries
Uncut, IPC Magazines, 13th Floor, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS *Tel:* 0171 261 6992 *Fax:* 0171 261 5573

Uncut Website
www.uncut.net/index.html

Uncut Advertisement Department
Tel: 0171-261 5643 *Fax:* 0171-261 5504

Advertisement Director
Nick Taylor

PA to Advertisement Director
Briony Quinn

Advertisement Manager (Film and Video)
Matt Batchelor

Senior Sales Executive
Dan Britcher

Senior Sales Executive (Back catalogue/Re-issues)
Richard Coles

Client Sales Administrator
Steven Filler 0171 261 5491

Sales Team
Siobhan Fitzpatrick, Rob O'Brien, Gary Pitt, Jon Lee, Chris West, Dan Britcher, St John Betteridge, Jacqui Gray and **Sally Merriman**

Group Classified Sales Manager
Louise Glautier 0171 261 6582

Group Head Classified Sales
Cameran Harman 0171 261 2886

Senior Classified Sales Executive
Ollie Chadwick 0171 261 2886

Sponsorship And Promotions Manager
Angus Robertson

Sponsorship And Promotions Executive
Sheila Williams

Advertisement Production
Laurie King 0171 261 5464

Production Manager **Mike Stead**
Associate Publisher **Neil Robinson**
Group Publisher **Robert Tame**
Editor-In-Chief **Alan Lewis**
Managing Director **Andy McDuff**

Subscription rates (12 months including p & p): UK £33, Europe/Eire £50, Middle East £65, America, Africa and Asia £75, Far East and Australasia £80, Worldwide Surface Mail £45. Enquiries: IPC Magazines, Oakfield House, 35 Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3DH Tel: (01444) 445 555 Fax: (01444) 445 599
© 1998 IPC Magazines No part of this magazine may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the prior permission of the publishers. Repro by BPC Magazines Ltd, London. Printed by Southernprint, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7SQ Distributed by Marketforce. **ISSN No: 1368-0722**

ipcmagazines
'A commitment to excellence'

I KNEW I WAS RIGHT: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

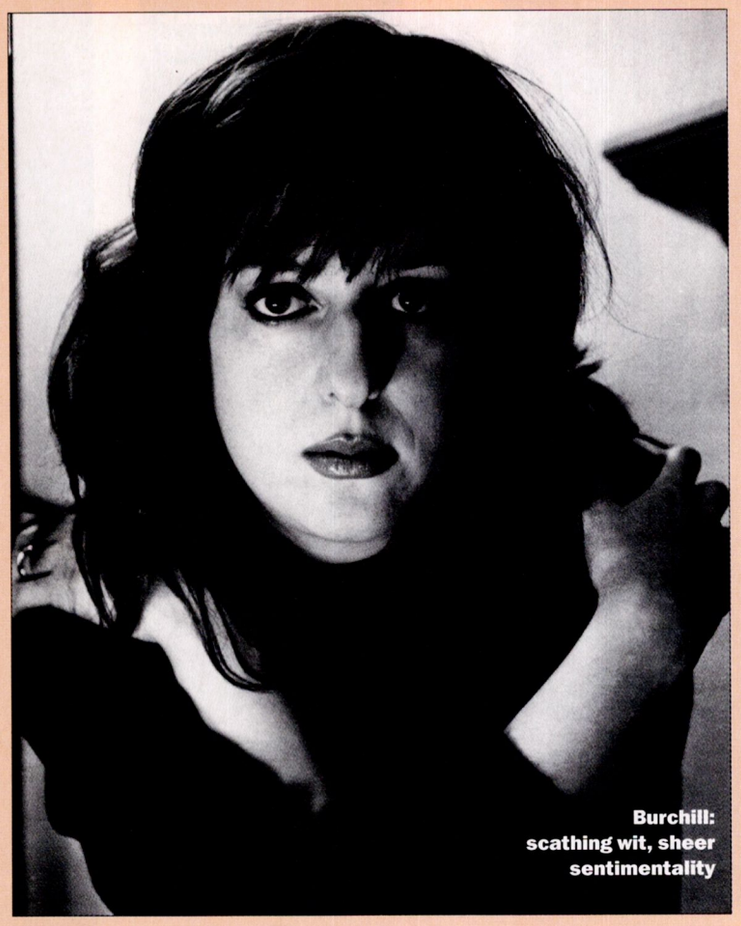
JULIE BURCHILL

Heinemann, £15.99

★★★★★

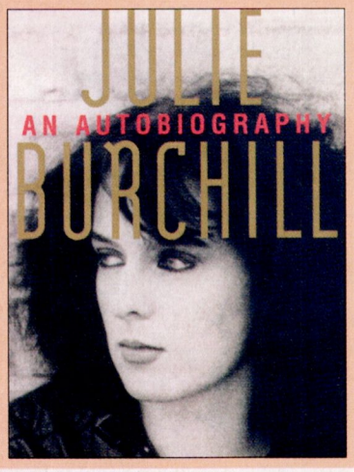
THERE are only three ex-pop hacks who could legitimately write their memoirs without accusations of hubris: one sings with The Pretenders, one is a Pet Shop Boy, and the other is Julie Burchill, one of the most famous women in the country never to have made a record or appeared in a movie. And only Burchill could fashion something quite so compelling from the relatively prosaic facts of her life. No James Ellroy-style parent murders to contend with for this working-class Bristol babe who seems to have acquired her vicious streak from the ether; no physical abuse to justify her gleeful maliciousness, no emotional torment with which to excuse her savage verbal drubbings. No, she was just born – "into the flaming crucible of July, 1959" – bad.

Burchill, the self-proclaimed sociopath with the sweet tooth (Cola bottles a particular favourite), left home at 16 to sell perfume (one of her abiding passions, along with coitus and communism) on a King's Cross station platform. She got a job with the *NME* at 17, and spent the next few years ascending the media ranks at breakneck speed and with breathtaking ease, from *The Face* to *The Sunday Times* to *The Mail On Sunday* – a journey, critics said, from left to right, although, really, she is the socialist-royalist she always was (her biography of Diana is imminent). *I Knew I Was Right* is evenly split between those early days in Somerset dreaming of sex, drugs and notoriety, and her subsequent reign as, first, the princess-pariah of punk, and second, the Queen of the Groucho – the best-known newspaper columnist in Britain, sufficiently renowned for her to be namechecked on radio and TV soaps.



Burchill: scathing wit, sheer sentimentality

Groucho barks



book of the month

Anyone remotely familiar with Burchill's awesome aphorisms these past 20 years will recognise the story of the girl with the strict moral code lambasted by the puritanical hypocrites of Fleet Street for leaving marriage and children behind to shack up with journalist Charlotte Raven, and will affect outrage/feign *ennui* accordingly. You may feel as confused as ever by the jarring blend of scathing wit and sheer sentimentality. This is, after all, the woman who once described the ditching of her first husband, Tony Parsons, as the best day's work she ever did, yet is moved almost to tears by memories of her childhood visit to Butlin's in Bognor Regis. But there's no doubting the power of her prose, if not the sincerity of her vision. "Even Hitler and Stalin cried," Julie told me recently, and I just knew she was right.

Paul Lester

MILES DAVIS COMPANION – FOUR DECADES OF COMMENTARY

ED: GARY CARNER ★★★

JIMI HENDRIX COMPANION – THREE DECADES OF COMMENTARY

ED: CHRIS POTASH ★★

Both Omnibus Press, £9.95

THESE two volumes comprise anthologies of journalism, contemporary and retrospective, about two great black musicians of the 20th century whose brilliance was not usually matched by any great desire to be particularly articulate about their work. Miles Davis was always a shy and prickly subject when it came to interviews, hostile to most journalists except "trusted" (ie unstintingly laudatory) writers such as Ralph Gleason. Hendrix's dope-addled cosmic meanderings, cut short when he died aged 27, aren't much of a bequest either.

It's been left to others, therefore, to dissect and speculate over this pair. The Miles Davis collection is the better of the two. Some of the pieces are a tad jazz-muso, others, such as Amiri Bakara's are too awestruck by their subject to make much sense ("This was the man who gave me consciousness").

The raciest reads are, interestingly, those expressing hostility to Miles Davis. Stanley Crouch's 1989 diatribe, "Play The Right Thing", lambasts Davis for embracing rock after *Bitches Brew* and, during the Eighties, consorting with the "vulgarian" Prince and the "racist" Public Enemy. All completely wrong-headed, of course – US jazz critics were as incapable of appreciating Miles Davis' modernism as were US rock critics capable (until recently) of appreciating dance crossover bands.

Jimi Hendrix whipped up such a blinding electric storm during his lifetime that, unsurprisingly, with rock criticism still in its infancy in the late Sixties, most of the journalists were too busy holding onto their hats in the teeth of his musical assault to make rhyme or reason of it all. Hendrix was caricatured as a "Wild Man" figure by those fazed by a black man playing rock. The adjective grab-bag of pieces here rarely extends beyond "way out" or "strongly formed style", while one American journalist, with praise so inappropriately faint it makes you want to weep, describes *Electric Ladyland* as an "overall solid achievement". Only Simon Reynolds, late of this parish, begins to sum up Hendrix's legacy and relevance to the Eighties and Nineties. Informative but turgid in the main.

David Stubbs

THE GREAT PSYCHEDELIC DISCOGRAPHY

MARTIN C STRONG

Canongate, £14.99 ★★★★

ACCORDING to Strong, compiler of *The Great Rock Discography*, "psychedelic" does not merely refer to a period of dazzling, drug-blasted experimentation which exploded three decades ago; it's a much broader term.

The psychedelic canon encompasses all kinds of off-the-planet futurism, from Hendrix, through Julian Cope, all the acid-tinged way past Primal Scream to The Aphex Twin.

To an extent, it's this scope and ambition that makes *The Great Psychedelic Discography* good rather than indispensable. Split into two sections, "psychedelia" and "retro-psychedelia", it makes rather too keen an attempt to recognise psychedelia in today's culture and skips essential details from the scene's bygone peak. Hence: The Smoke, Sagittarius, Millennium and The Action – all notorious psych practitioners – are not here, while Teenage Fanclub and Low, neither notorious psych practitioners in the slightest, are. Prog makes rather a large appearance, but garage rock doesn't.

These minor gripes aside, we have a pretty special tome here. Trainspotters will be aware that there are two kinds of rock guides on the market at the moment: the impartial guide (*Rolling Stone's Encyclopedia Of Rock And Roll*, *Q's Encyclopedia Of Rock Stars*), which will give you the facts, and the hands-on guide (*The Rough Guide To Rock*, *Spin's Alternative Record Guide*) which will turn you onto something new.

Strong makes a brave attempt to combine the two. There are band histories, chart placements, labels, and tracklistings. But there are recommended albums, and "a very brief history of psychedelia", too.

All of which means that, providing they're prepared to take time out to decipher the intricate coding which Strong uses on each entry, the fan of rock's still-unwinding kaleidoscope will be hugely rewarded, as well as the archivist.

Tom Cox

THE NEAREST FARAWAY PLACE: BRIAN WILSON, THE BEACH BOYS AND THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EXPERIENCE

TIMOTHY WHITE

Macmillan, £6.99 ★★

HOW do you organise the massive legend of America's most important ever band? White's approach is to make The Beach Boys not just the centrepoint of the flowering Californian dream in the Sixties but the whole, ancient evolution of the sunshine state. If you buy *The Nearest Faraway Place . . .*, you buy a veritable family tree, from great, great, great grandad Wilson up.

This creates a number of problems. Casual readers will apprehensively note that Brian isn't born until page 63, and the first single, "Surfin'", isn't transferred to tape until page 140. And after an exhaustive account of premature Sixties stardom, aficionados might frown at the lack of detail surrounding the Boys' classic, much-misunderstood Seventies period (although White does rightly recognise 1970's *Sunflower* as "perhaps their greatest album").

White's attempt to make the book read more like fiction than research is admirable (the quotes are minimal, and usually reconstructions of actual scenarios) and the insights into Brian's childhood relationship with his father, Murry, are astounding. He does, however, have an unsettling tendency to shoot off at tangents to background an anecdote (when

Wilson: sun god

Dennis catches his first waves, do we really need an in-depth history of the surfing industry?). Plus, coming from the editorial office of America's *Billboard* magazine, he betrays a dry music biz perspective: the story of Brian's mental collapse, for example, is disrupted by irrelevant details about corporate wranglings.

Ultimately, there are stories within stories here, and this is a great tale no matter who's telling it. But dealing with the gods of sun, symphony and psychoneurosis, we could've been forgiven for anticipating a little more good old-fashioned rock'n'roll dirt.

Tom Cox

Luc Besson on the set of The Fifth Element

THE STORY OF THE FIFTH ELEMENT

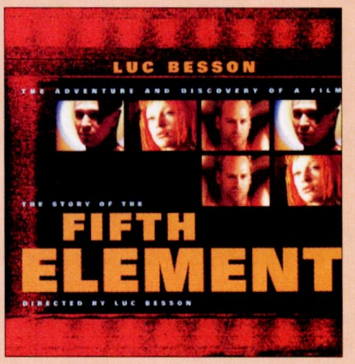
LUC BESSON

Titan, £24.99

★★★

ONE of the most visually inventive films of all time, a riotously loud and colourful vision of the future, it was inevitable that *The Fifth Element* would spawn one of these costly companion albums.

For once, though, the price is justified, as Besson avoids the usual showbiz guff and offers a brutally honest week-by-week account of the film's protracted and torturous development, from teenage daydream to multi-million dollar smash. Along the way, we discover that the real stars of



the film (indeed any sci-fi film) are tucked way down at the end of the credits: the artists and designers whose involvement with the film ends once the cameras start rolling. In between pages of sumptuous stills and behind-the-scenes photographs are preliminary sketches for costumes, aliens, spaceships and cities that represent thousands of man-hours of intense artistic achievement.

Jean-Paul Gaultier's outrageously camp future-*couture* is delicious, while French comic artist Moebius' dreamlike apparitions outdo even his work on *Alien* or *Blade Runner*.

A testament both to Gallic flair and the sheer backbreaking labour that goes into a film this big, consider this weighty, glossy coffee-table king the prequel they never made.

Simon Lewis

WALK THIS WAY – THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AEROSMITH

AEROSMITH WITH STEPHEN DAVIS

Virgin, £16.99 ★★★★

TO the biographer, The Aerosmith story promises debauchery on a scale previously only enjoyed by porn barons and the owners of small farm holdings. However, the road to excess for Aerosmith eventually led to the wisdom of a 12-step programme that in turn encouraged them to exert rigid control over every facet of their business, music and private lives, and, by extension, this biography. No bad thing for them – turning blue in other people's bathrooms can become somewhat tiresome – but, for the reader, it means *Walk This Way* . . . is a slightly abridged classic.

Davis' legendary *Hammer Of The Gods* worked so well firstly because of the literally blow-by-blow accounts of its penniless smack-addicted ex-road manager, and secondly because the skeletons in the Zep's closets had always been kept under lock and key by the persuasive mix of managerial finesse and the extremely heavy presence of the band's manager, Peter Grant.

The same cannot be said of Aerosmith. If you've read three decent articles on the band in recent years, you'll already know virtually all the stories here. With each subsequent retelling, the story pales. And, while on the surface a bit of a hoot, *Walk This Way* . . . falls foul of the same problems that blighted Davis' Mick Fleetwood biog. His subjects hire him for the notoriety of his Zeppelin biography, but certainly don't want the appalling details of what *they* did with dead baby sharks.

What you get is basically *Aerosmith: The MTV Biopic*. Ironically, despite the lurid claims of backstage excess, where this biography really scores is in the fine detail of the first half of the book, which methodically and fascinatingly plots the genesis of the band in each member's own words.

The conversational style means that while the book itself is thicker than a house brick, you'll pretty much breeze through it.

Recommended.

Mat Smith

Diena Fabio

Aerosmith's Tyler: sweet smell of excess

SCREEN TEST ANSWERS: 1. A View To A Kill – Duran Duran • 2. Robert Duvall • 3. Coming To America • 4. A Few Good Men • 5. Snowflake • 6. Badlands • 7. Frankenstein • 8. Brazil • 9. Kevin Costner • 10. a) George Of The Jungle, b) The Shawshank Redemption, c) Beetlejuice, d) Platoon, e) The Madness Of King George • 11. Mars Attacks! • 12. Perfect • 13. The Player • 14. Susan Sarandon • 15. Woody Allen • 16. Boris Karloff • 17. The Godfather Part Two • 18. Sleep With Me • 19. Silverado, A Fish Called Wanda, Fierce Creatures • 20. One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, Goin' South, Terms Of Endearment, Hoffa • 21. a) Swansea, b) Los Angeles, c) New York, d) Vienna, e) New Orleans • 22. Lloyd and Harry • 23. Adrian Cronauer • 24. Fireman • 25. Doctor

LAST MONTH'S PRIZE QUESTION ANSWERS: 1. Dr No • 2. Live And Let Die • 3. The Long Good Friday • 4. Jack Lord • 5. Sean Bean Winner: Marc Henrie, Glasgow

UNCUT UNCONDITIONALLY GUARANTEED

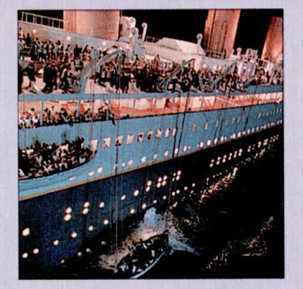
The best current movies, albums and books

MUST SEE *Boogie Nights, Resurrection Man, Das Boot, Titanic, Kissed*

BOOGIE NIGHTS
Paul Thomas Anderson's widely-acclaimed debut is arguably the first feelgood family film set in and around the porn business. Whatever it lacks in moral or historical depth is made up for by its brilliant evocation of the Seventies, grand performances and sizzling dialogue.

RESURRECTION MAN
Based on the bloody exploits of Belfast's notorious murder gang, The Shankill Butchers, this is one of the most brutal, terrifying and remarkable British films ever made, an uncompromising examination of male violence and sexuality. Complex, macabre and disturbing – essential viewing.

DAS BOOT
Woflgang Petersen's director's cut of his classic 1981 war movie about life on a German U-Boat. An often unbearably tense and claustrophobic movie that reeks of impending doom and the desperation of a crew who realise events are turning against them. An exceptionally well-turned movie.

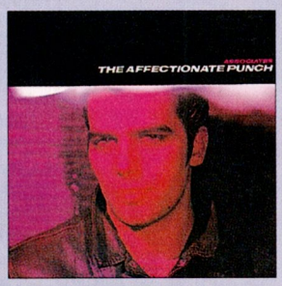


TITANIC
The most expensive movie ever made, Cameron's epic realisation of the doomed maiden voyage is a sumptuously-staged extravaganza, part heart-wringing romance, part disaster movie. The acting honours in a film dominated by its special effects go to the outrageously camp and evil Billy Zane.

KISSED
That the genuine taboo of necrophilia is handled intelligently and believably in Lynne Stopkewich's debut film is on its own remarkable. That the movie also carries a sweet, seductive emotional resonance is astonishing. Dead subversive.

MUST HEAR *Whiskeytown, The Associates, Wingless Angels, The High Llamas, Mark Hollis*

WHISKEYTOWN: Strangers Almanac *(Outpost/Geffen)*
Like all great records, this second LP from North Carolina's Whiskeytown reminds you of other great LPs. But, for all his influences, there's no denying the individuality of David Ryan Adams' songwriting. 1998's first truly indispensable album.



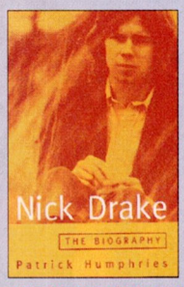
THE ASSOCIATES: The Affectionate Punch *(Kitchenware)*
Their 1982 debut remains spectacularly undated, as vivid and bewildering now as it sounded then. The late Billy Mackenzie and Alan Rankine encapsulated all the promise of pop – otherness, grand passion and panache.

WINGLESS ANGELS: Wingless Angels *(Island Jamaica)*
Magical and mystical and herbally refreshed, these Rasta mates of Keith Richards were recorded one night in the yard of his Jamaican villa. The results are spiritual and stoned, intimate and inspiring.

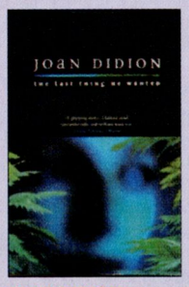
THE HIGH LLAMAS: Cold And Bouncy *(Alpaca)*
Sixteen tracks, half of which are luscious, fully-formed tunes, the other half of which are keyboard-triggered effects – transient random tone bursts, lock-groove lullabies, wows and flutters, plastic pulse refractions, melochords and lo boob oscillations.

MARK HOLLIS: Mark Hollis *(Verve)*
An album as far from the blaring imperatives of pop as it's possible to be. Entirely acoustic to the point of being unnervingly bare, this is a record of quiet, transparent beauty, floating free of genre and time period.

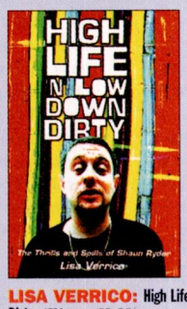
MUST READ *Nick Drake revisited, Joan Didion, Shaun Ryder's high times, Oliver Stone, The Byrds*



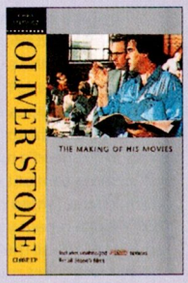
PATRICK HUMPHRIES: Nick Drake – The Biography *(Bloomsbury £18.99)*
This definitive biography of the late singer-songwriter is a rich, moving account of a troubled spirit, a mature evocation of a briefly flickering talent unable to come to terms with the adult world. Highly recommended.



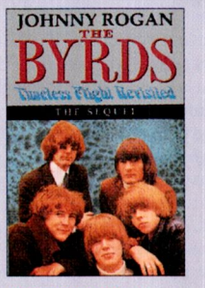
JOAN DIDION: The Last Thing He Wanted *(Flamingo £6.99)*
Didion's first novel in more than a decade is set in 1984. Full of intimated terror and as suspenseful as a first-rate thriller, this is a cool, fiercely intelligent dissection of lives disrupted and destroyed by the cynical manipulations of a corrupt government and its covert agencies.



LISA VERRICO: High Life'N'Low Down Dirty *(Ebury, £9.99)*
This unauthorised biography of Shaun Ryder, from Happy Mondays to Black Grape, via more drugs than you can imagine, is a classic rock'n'roll story, which Verrico tackles admirably. Brilliantly colourful anecdotes and eyewitness recollections make this an illuminating, vivid read.



CHRIS SALEWICZ: Oliver Stone – The Making Of His Movies *(Orion Media £9.99)*
Salewicz's take on the controversial Stone is thankfully sensible, with little of the hysteria that usually surrounds writing about him, and his interviews with his subject are always interesting, if not exactly revelatory. Nicely-timed, though, with the brilliant *U-Turn* out soon.



JOHNNY ROGAN: The Byrds: Timeless Flight Revisited *(Rogan House £20)*
Rogan's expanded and revised account of the troubled, brilliant career of one of the most influential rock bands ever is mammoth, exhaustively researched and meticulously detailed, and covers all the major upheavals and in-fighting that characterised The Byrds' erratic career.

SID VICIOUS Continued from page 67

any given time. As far as the people running it were concerned, as long as they received their money for the room and as long as there were no major complaints and the police weren't called in too often, they didn't care what went on.

So imagine the scene: an open hotel room, Nancy passed out on the bed, Sid fucked up on drugs and alcohol, guitars, clothes, money laying around.

Someone is in the room, going through all this stuff. They don't give a shit that it's Sid and Nancy. Who the fuck is Sid Vicious, anyway? Some washed-up punk rock star. As far as anyone's concerned who might have been there, Sid and Nancy are just another couple of junkies with money and valuables that can be sold for cash to buy drugs.

Maybe Nancy wakes up, catches someone in the act of robbing them. A fight or struggle breaks out. She's stabbed and bleeds to death.

Sid is oblivious.

When he finally wakes up, there's blood everywhere and Nancy's under the sink with his knife in her side and he can't remember anything.

This was always the worst part for Sid, that everything about that night was a blank, that there were so many unanswered questions.

Like: where was the money, the $1,500 from Virgin and the clothes that were missing? Obviously, the room had been robbed.

Like: what happened to the guy from the Bronx, who nobody knew and nobody ever saw again?

Because he couldn't remember what had happened, I think Sid at first thought maybe he could have done it. In the beginning, he was so shocked by everything, he wondered whether he had killed her, and, of course, everyone was accusing him of having done it, and that caused a lot of doubts.

But that last night I was with him, I think by then he truly believed he hadn't done it and he was making plans to clear his name. There really was a big difference in him that night. he was more like the person he was when I first met him. He was a lot calmer, you could talk to him a lot easier.

And we talked about a lot of things that night. The album he was going to make with Steve and Paul to pay for his legal costs. How he was going to clear his name. He felt like he had some hope. It wasn't like I was talking to someone who'd given up. There was some light. He was in a really positive mood that evening, certainly not suicidal. Which is why I was astonished when he died. When I left him, he was fine, so I was amazed at what happened. Did his mother give him the rest of the heroin that night when I told her not to? Maybe she just gave in to his demands for what was left. Junkies can be the most persistent people in the world, and we were all young and stupid back then, and maybe Sid paid the price with his life. Even so, I don't know that there was enough of the stuff left to kill him off.

Did someone else turn up with some stuff? Unlikely. I don't think anyone turned up after I left and there had been no calls that evening from people saying they were coming over.

Do I feel guilty about what happened? Do I blame myself for his death? To be honest, not really.

I don't think I was responsible. It may be wrong for me to say that, but put it this way. Somebody sells somebody a bottle of booze and they get drunk and the next day, they're driving and they get killed in a car crash. Is the person who sold them the booze responsible? I don't think so. I was responsible for finding something for someone who had asked me for that stuff. But when I left him, he wasn't dead and the majority of what I'd brought with me was gone. So I find it really strange that he could have died on what was left. The last time I saw him, he wasn't dead – far from it. I could say, looking back, that I wish I hadn't got him the stuff, but I don't feel responsible for him dying.

Some people at the time said he was actually better off dead. But I wish he'd lived. Not for me, but for him. I wish he'd had the chance to clear up the mess that surrounded him at the time of his death. That he died when he did, with everything still unclear and unresolved, was pure tragedy. Sid was no Hendrix on guitar and no Bob Dylan with words. But he had been a member of The Sex Pistols, and they, if only briefly, had as much influence on the music, style and thinking of their generation as anyone before or since has had on their own generation.

On the set of *The Great Rock'N'Roll Swindle*: Sid doing it his way

POSTSCRIPT

After Sid died, I came back to London and got back into photography. But I stopped doing a lot of music things. I'd become pretty disgusted with the music business by then. I'd seen too many things, too many people being obviously and blatantly ripped off. There are people in the music business who don't give a shit about anybody.

They don't care about the people in bands and they get the bands into drugs, even if they're only indirectly responsible. They make sure bands get what they want, just to keep them quiet. As long as they make their money, fine.

That's all they're interested in. Then it's on to the next band. Sid was a victim of that culture, those vultures.

Music can make you rich. But it's a filthy business.

So's life, a lot of the time.

R.I.P., Sid.

Action Bob

'He was chaos incarnate . . .'

MALCOLM McLAREN, because of his reputation for scheming and manipulation, is often seen as one of the villains in the Sid Vicious story. But, within 24 hours of Sid's arrest for Nancy's murder, he was in New York, hiring F Lee Bailey – later part of OJ Simpson's defence team – and private detectives, whose immediate investigations revealed numerous inconsistencies in the police case against Sid and the distinct possibility of third-party involvement.

"He was chaos incarnate," McLaren later wrote of Sid, "and he made my blood flow. And I suspected that if I didn't help him, no one else would."

Edited by Tony Horkins/Test by Chris Jenkins

The big picture

For a real home cinema experience, you should ditch the TV and get a video projector . . .

THE SIZE OF CONVENTIONAL CATHODE-RAY tube TVs is limited by practical considerations like weight; even rear-projection sets are practical only for sizes up to around 60 inches. The situation may change with the advent of large wall-hanging flat LCD or plasma screens, but it will be a few years before these are affordable. So what do you do if you want a cinema-sized picture without filling your room with a huge TV? The answer is video projection.

Video projectors are similar to film projectors in that they turn a moving image into a light beam which is aimed at a reflective surface. The image can come from any video source and can be any size depending on the power of the projector and the practical size of the screen; 70-inch to 100-inch is common, though even with the most powerful systems performance is better if the room is darkened. Conventional cathode-ray tube projectors use three light "guns" – red, green and blue – to make up the image. The convergence of the guns has to be set carefully, and, since they are still relatively bulky, many users mount CRT projectors in lift mechanisms concealed in a ceiling or a table. Neither of these are cheap options, and installing a roll-down screen adds to the expense.

CRT projectors are the closest you will get to a cinema-quality image, but LCD projectors offer a cheaper and less complex alternative. These types contain a semi-transparent LCD panel through which the light shines to create the image. LCD models need less cooling, and so suffer less from the problem of fan noise than CRT models. They are also smaller and lighter, and do not need convergence adjustment. The drawback is that the limited number of pixels in the LCD causes a mesh-like, "chicken-wire" effect on the projected image.

As for projection screens, the best, in the sense of offering the brightest response, are high-reflectivity types, but these can cost more than the projector itself. Polarised screens give almost equally good results, and are more economical, but the viewing angle is crucial; outside an arc of around 15-20 degrees from the perpendicular, their image brightness drops sharply.

Probably the best option for domestic use is also the cheapest – a straightforward matt white film projection screen, at around £70 for a 50x50-inch to £120 for a 70x70-inch. For more advice on screens, contact a specialist such as The Widescreen Centre (0171-935 2580), and, on projector installation, try the installers' trade association, CEDIA, on 0171-354 8855.

Meanwhile, here are a few systems to consider . . .

YOU WHAT? A glossary of terms

ANSI: American National Standards Institute

Composite, or a video signal combining all three colour components

CONVERGENCE: the adjustment of a projector's CRT guns to form a focused and perpendicular image

CRT: cathode ray tube, the conventional TV or video projector technology

DVD: Digital Versatile Disc, the next-generation video and data carrier medium

LCD: Liquid Crystal Display, a low-cost video projection system

LETTERBOX: the cinema-style picture shape with a width/height ratio of 16:9 or 21:9

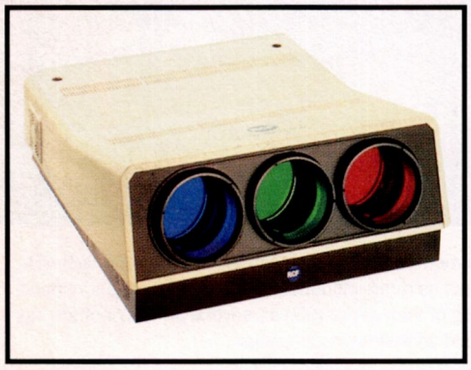
LINE DOUBLER: 'interpolates' extra lines between those of a video signal to give a smoother image

LUMEN: a measure of light output

LUX: a measure of brightness equivalent to one lumen per square metre

SECAM: from *Sequentiel Couleur avec Memoire*, the European broadcast/video recording standard

S-VIDEO: or **Y/C,** the high-band video signal standard in which colour and brightness components are separated to provide a higher resolution signal



RCF LS5001

£5,170 ★★★★

They say: "Enjoy the sound and vision of home cinema – audio is only half the story!"

We say: This Italian-made CRT projector represents a remarkable combination of performance and value for money. Featuring three 5.5-inch tubes with hybrid glass/plastic lenses, the 5001 is a multi-standard model with composite-, S- and RGB-video inputs. It is also reasonably light and compact for a CRT model, weighing 35kg and measuring 565x715x250mm.

There's an on-screen parameter display with crosshatching and colour-bar generator for line-up, and capable of generating an image up to 250-inch diagonally, the 5001 has a choice of 4:3 and 16:9 aspect ratios, and parameter storage memories for each input. Screen and curtain controls can be set for each aspect ratio. There's no sound system or TV tuner, but most users of a CRT projector will want to use it with a LaserDisc player and a surround-sound system anyway. Fan noise is relatively low and picture is excellent in a darkened room.

Also available at £5,499 is the LS5001-WS, a version optimised for widescreen aspect ratios.

MARANTZ VP600

£1,300 ★★★

They say: "Portable and easy to use, the VP600 is the easy way into video projection."

We say: Weighing just 4.5kg, this compact, futuristic-looking LCD projector is ideal for domestic or business presentation use, but it does not feature audio facilities. There's no convergence adjustment facility, either, so the projector needs to be set up perpendicular to the screen.

Other than that, it's very easy to use. There are two composite video inputs and one S-video, and the system automatically detects whether the input signal is in PAL, NTSC or SECAM format. Picture brightness, colour level, NTSC colour tint, input channel and widescreen mode (of which there are two, 16:9 and 21:9) are selected using a single control mode button, and there's an automatic shut-off feature.

Using a 1.3-inch polysilicon active matrix LCD of 750x240 pixels, in a darkened room the Marantz's picture is surprisingly good at sizes up to around 55 inches. Colour is good, and contrast is on the order of 100:1, with the 150W, 21V halogen bulb providing a brightness of 70 lux with a 40-inch picture.

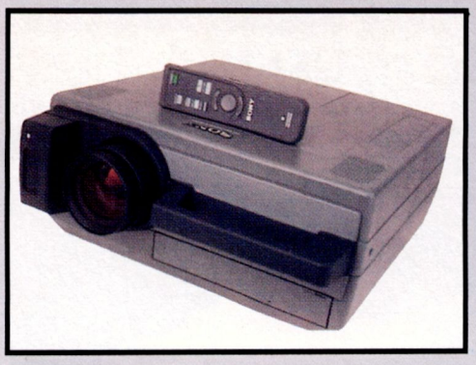
SHARP VL-C1E

£995 ★★★

They say: "Small, attractive and convenient without compromising on features."

We say: The VL-C1E is one of the most attractive sub-£1,000 models around. Finished in stylish silver and weighing 3.5kg, it measures just 210x130x277mm, so it can be carried effortlessly by its built-in handle, and can be set up quickly and easily. The C1's 150W metal halide bulb produces a bright (50 ANSI lumen) picture of up to 150-inch diagonal (around 100-inch is ideal). It automatically adjusts to PAL, NTSC and SECAM signals, and has variable brightness, contrast, colour level and NTSC tint. The 1.3-inch LCD panel has 60,490 pixels, and a diffraction grating reduces the usual "chicken wire" effect on the 360-line image.

The C1 has composite and S-video and stereo audio inputs, a small 1W amplifier and speaker, and a "blue mute" function which projects a comfortable blue image instead of a screen full of white noise when there is no video input signal. The lens shift function enables the user to position the image on the screen without moving the projector, an unusual feature at this price range.

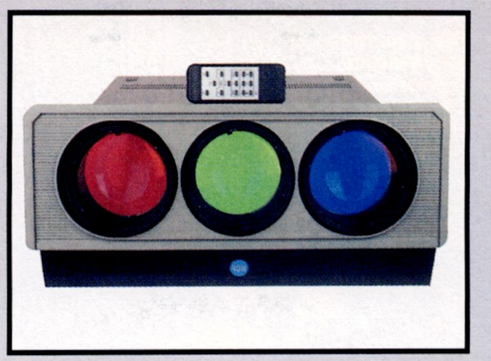


SONY VPL-W400
£5,499 ★★★

They say: "Bringing the excitement of large-screen viewing wherever it is used."

We say: One of the W400's major selling points is that it is designed specially for widescreen viewing. Most projectors are set for a standard 4:3 aspect ratio, though many have a widescreen mode. The W400 is a multi-standard, data-grade projector with three 1.35-inch LCD panels giving a total of 1,538,640 pixels. Claimed resolution is 600 lines, and for a 16:9 ratio image you can get up to around 300 inches diagonally.

A selection of wide, zoom and subtitle modes enables you to adjust 4:3 ratio pictures to fill the wide screen shape. The W400 has an infra-red remote control and an illuminated control panel, featuring brightness, colour, contrast, NTSC hue, sharpness and colour temperature. There are composite, S-video, RGB and stereo audio inputs, as well as stereo phono outputs, a Control-S connector, a built-in 2W stereo sound system, and a trigger function to control lighting and curtains. The W400 is an impressive performer.

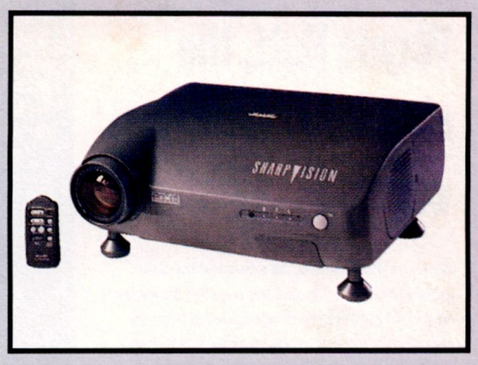


RCF LS3001
£3,995 ★★★★

They say: "If your sound is bigger than your screen, it's time to think about the big picture."

We say: Voted the European Projector of the Year, 1997, the LS3001, although it's a full-spec three-tube CRT design, costs about the same as a budget-priced LCD model. Featuring multi-standard operation, a widescreen mode, and composite video, S-video and Scart inputs, the 3001 runs surprisingly quietly; its liquid-cooled Toshiba picture tubes don't need the fans required by the Sony tubes of previous models. Hybrid glass/plastic lenses give excellent resolution and colour fidelity, although brightness is perhaps less than that of more expensive models, so a thoroughly darkened environment is necessary.

At 31kg and measuring 565x715x250mm, the 3001 is about average in size and weight for a CRT model. Image sizes of up to 250 inches diagonal are practical. The 3001 comes with a remote control and a ceiling mounting kit, and can also be floor-mounted or used as a rear projector.



SHARP XV-380H
£2,795 ★★★★

They say: "Exceptional performance at an exceptionally low price."

We say: The 380H is at the high end of the LCD video projector market, aimed at enthusiastic home cinema fans or commercial applications, and boasts an impressive performance. The secret is the incorporation of three 3-inch diagonal LCD panels, each with 309,120 pixels. Together with a 250W metal halide lamp, this gives the projector's image a resolution of 500 lines with a 100:1 contrast ratio and 150 ANSI lumens of brightness.

Measuring 500x201x447mm, the 380H weighs 11.4kg. Inputs include two composite video, one S-video and stereo audio; there's also a composite video output to connect to a monitor screen, and the projector has a 3W mono sound system with an 8cm speaker. The 380H is multi-standard compatible, and has motorised zoom and focusing functions. Optimum image size is 200 inches diagonal, from a distance of around 8 metres.

SELECO SVP350
£3,778 ★★★★

They say: "A sleek, stylish new body housing a host of improvements."

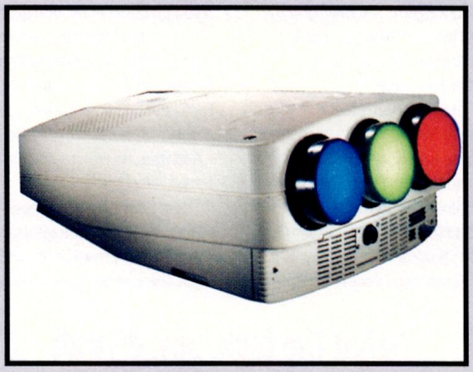
We say: Building on the success of Seleco models such as the SVT150 and SVP400HT, the SVP350 is the latest in an appealing line of three-gun CRT video projectors.

Boasting a maximum image size of around 250 inches, the SVP350 can have the "keystoning" – the inward tilt of the edges of the picture – adjusted through 20 degrees in order to make picture alignment easier.

Equipped with a Scart socket for easy connection to a wide range of video equipment, the 350 has a built-in TV tuner and amplifier compatible with NICAM digital stereo signals, and has a 16:9 widescreen aspect ratio setting.

Focus control and resolution are improved compared to previous models, and bandwidth increased from 7MHz to 12MHz for a more detailed picture.

Functions such as horizontal and vertical image size, picture masking and keystoning can be controlled remotely.



BARCO 708
£12,789 ★★★★

They say: "An outstanding array of technical features and a compact, lightweight design."

We say: Barco CRT projectors are the industry standard for commercial installations, and though cheaper LCD models have made inroads into the domestic market, you can't beat a Barco for picture quality if you have the cash to spend. The 708 is a data-grade model featuring two technological innovations. One is IRIS, a convergence system using a tiny CCD camera which automatically sets the focus of the three CRT tubes. The other is LIDO, an optional line doubler which uprates any incoming signal by line interpolation.

Inputs include multi-standard composite video, S-video, RGB for input from a PC at resolutions up to 1280x1024, and RS-232 for integration with systems such as lighting and curtain controllers. The hybrid glass/plastic lens system gives an image up to 20-feet wide, and there's a comprehensive range of on-screen adjustment parameters as well as an illuminated remote control. Home cinema systems using something like the Barco are the closest you can get to having a cinema in your house.

SONY VPH-D50QM
£8,812 ★★★

They say: "A high-performance, cost-effective projector for more exciting home theatrical entertainment."

We say: This is one of the most impressive data-grade CRT projectors in its price range. However, with the addition of the EXB-DS10 line doubler board, which adds £1,703 to the price, the D50 is in a class of its own.

Weighing 54.2kg and measuring 603x345x671mm, the D50 is actually fairly compact compared to some CRT models. The multi-language, on-screen menu system includes options to alter the contrast, colour, brightness, NTSC hue, sharpness and colour balance, and the system is multi-standard. There are composite, S- and RGB-video inputs, video output and RS-422 and Control-S links, and two remote controls; a comprehensive hard-wired one for parameter adjustment, and a simpler basic infra-red model for everyday use, which is an optional extra. Operating noise is reasonable, and the D50 is capable of projecting a 250-inch diagonal image with 700-line resolution, suitable for viewing in a slightly darkened room; in complete darkness, the image is stunning, and with the line doubler in action you could not find a better picture anywhere.

Wayne Nutt, the singing oil man, comes out fighting

'If Reb's after you, then your soul may belong to God, but your ass belongs to Reb': Ol' Reb and Wayne Nutt

Robert Ellis

The next thing I know, he's twisted my scarf around my neck, hauled me over his shoulder and is threatening to drag me out of the pub and into the street, where he intends to hang me from the nearest lamp post, all for an unflattering review of his album that had appeared the week before in *Melody Maker*, but which I hadn't written. I try to tell him this, but the scarf he's twisted around my neck is choking me and I can't for the moment even speak. "Sonuva*bitch*," he drawls. "Shut th' fuck *up* an' prepare to die like a goddam *dog*."

Humorously rotund photographer Tom Sheehan, on assignment here for CBS Records, steps in and in no uncertain terms and a lot of swearing manages to convince him that the review of his album that had offended him to the point of reckless violence had been written by someone else, not me.

At which point, he lets go of the scarf and I slump to the carpet gasping for air. He looks down at me, prods me with the toe of his boot and spits. "Y'all," he says with some menace, "were damn near dead and gone to hell."

This is March, 1976, and we are in Aberdeen to meet the appropriately-named Wayne Nutt, an American oil-man, who until becoming a professional country singer and signing recently to CBS was working the off-shore rigs up here. Now he's got an album out. It's called *Oil Field Man*.

The record is terrible, which is what *Melody Maker* said about it, riling Wayne as a result. Whatever its musical shortcomings, however, when the chance of flying to Scotland to meet its author comes up, I grab it and go. This is where Sheehan, who will later become *MM* chief photographer and legendarily truculent lensman, comes in. He's up here with a contingent from CBS which includes Roseanne Cash, daughter of Johnny, later a country star herself, but right now working in some menial capacity for the record label. By the time I meet them in the bar of Aberdeen's Imperial Hotel, Sheehan and Cash are both drunk, and he's convinced Roseanne that corgis are the national dish of Scotland, which she's right now actually trying to order from a waiter whose confusion couldn't be more apparent if his trousers were on fire.

Not long after this, Wayne appears.

We had met him the night before, which was when he'd tried to hang me after a show he'd played in town. In his dressing-room, he'd sworn a lot and made us drink 200 per cent-proof whiskey, a vintage brew he poured out of an old oak casket. This whiskey was apparently priceless – every drop should be savoured, taken neat or not at all. As he's explaining this with a nasty little look in his eye, Sheehan's busy pouring Coke into his whiskey and looking for ice to add to it. Wayne looks like he's going to shit. "What tha fuck, boy," he asks, horrified, "d'y'all think you're doin'? Get tha fuck outta here before I shoot you between the legs."

The photographer is suitably chastened and, mumbling vaguely about dark spirits being voodoo and never therefore to be touched, makes a hasty exit. Wayne re-fills my glass, raises his own in a toast.

"Here's to it and from it and to doin' it again, and if you get to it to do it and don't, you'll never get to it to do it again," he laughs with some gusto, and I join in: "Now you say it," he says, but I'm already too pissed and can't, which makes him laugh.

Back at the bar of the Imperial Hotel, we're talking about his life, which needless to say is pretty fucking colourful. He was born in 1940, in Commanche, Oklahoma. His father, who has been immortalised on Wayne's album, in a song called "The Ballad Of Wendell Nutt", was racing across Oklahoma, with Wayne's mother in labour in the back seat of their car, heading for the state line, so that Wayne could be born across the border, in Texas.

"He didn't make it," Wayne tells me, and you can tell in turn that this still hurts, though it's not something you'd want to pick a fight with him about. "But it don't mean a damn thing. I'm still a Texan, and no one's ever gonna tell me no different. Don't mean a bean wherever the hell I was born, I'm a *Texan*."

'What the fuck, boy, d'ya all think you're doin'? Get the fuck outta here before I shoot you between the legs'

As if to prove this, Wayne's conversation is littered with anecdotes of bar-room brawls, assaults on total strangers who have unwittingly provoked him, and what he calls "knockdown drag-outs just for the pure hellish fun of it".

This is Wayne on what's so great about fighting: "A good fight," he says, "is as good as a good drink. Ain't nothin' like fightin' just for the fun of it. The . . . the *manly* thing of it. You should try it some time. The worst beating I ever got was in Houston. The Polka Dot Lounge. Three ol' boys got to mouthin' off and I thought, 'Hell, there's only three of them,' and I jumped and they proceeded to kick the livin' hell outta me. I was in hospital for four days. But what the hell? It was a good fight."

In Wayne's world, you don't back down, and if you go down at all, you go down fighting.

"It's a live-and-let-live world," he opines, thoughtfully. "I've got my little corner of it and you've got yours. And I'm not gonna try to get into your corner, and you *damn well* better not try to get into mine."

And then he was telling me how much he hated New York.

"Never seen such a place. The people are *idiots*. Damn Yankee idiots. I had six fights in my first day there and I won them all, by God. The people were just rude and intolerant. Don't have time for no one. Don't talk polite. Hell, where I come from, you talk to a man like that, he's gonna knock your damn head off. That's what I did.

"I stayed at the Barclay Hotel. Rented a suite. I'd just got in from Trinidad with a pocketful of money and looking for a good time. I stayed in New York a day and a half. Fought my way from one end of Manhattan to the other. I've only been back once. Three years ago. And I got into it all again. At the airport. Trying to get some tickets to fly out to Nigeria. I knew they were there. I told the guy at the counter who I was and politely asked him for the tickets. He said he didn't have any in my name. He didn't even *look*. And I could see them. They were there, with *my name* on the envelope.

"I told him he'd made a bad mistake. And he said . . ." Wayne's voice becomes grave at this point, ". . . *'Go away, Texas trash.'* I looked at him in total surprise for a second. Then I grabbed him by his tie, dragged him over the counter and stomped his guts into the ground."

Wayne's still laughing at this a couple of nights later at his house a couple of miles outside Dunblane, where he's hosting a party for the support bands on his current tour with Slim Whitman. There's a dog at his feet who looks every bit as mean as he does. The dog's a vicious-looking crossbred Alsatian husky. Its name is Rebel.

"He might look docile now," Wayne tells us, "but when he's angry even I wouldn't tangle with Ol' Reb. If he's after you, then your soul may belong to God, but your ass belongs to Reb."

Wayne chuckles heartily at this and knocks back another large one.

"Anyone want to hear a nigra joke?" he asks and people around him begin to get uncomfortable.

One of the support bands at the party is fronted by a singer named Jeannie Denver who thinks she's Tammy Wynette. Jeannie's from Bolton Woods, which is apparently somewhere near Bradford. Her husband, a black guy, plays bass in her band. His name is Stewart and he's sporting an afro.

Wayne squints sideways at Stewart's hair.

"I've been meaning to ask you, Stewart," Wayne begins, "just what kinda horror stories you read before you go to sleep at night to make your hair stand on end all the next day? It'd sure look a lot better if you had that shaped like a stetson. You know, the way they cut garden hedges and that?"

Wayne laughs like this is the funniest thing he's ever heard. Stewart smiles weakly.

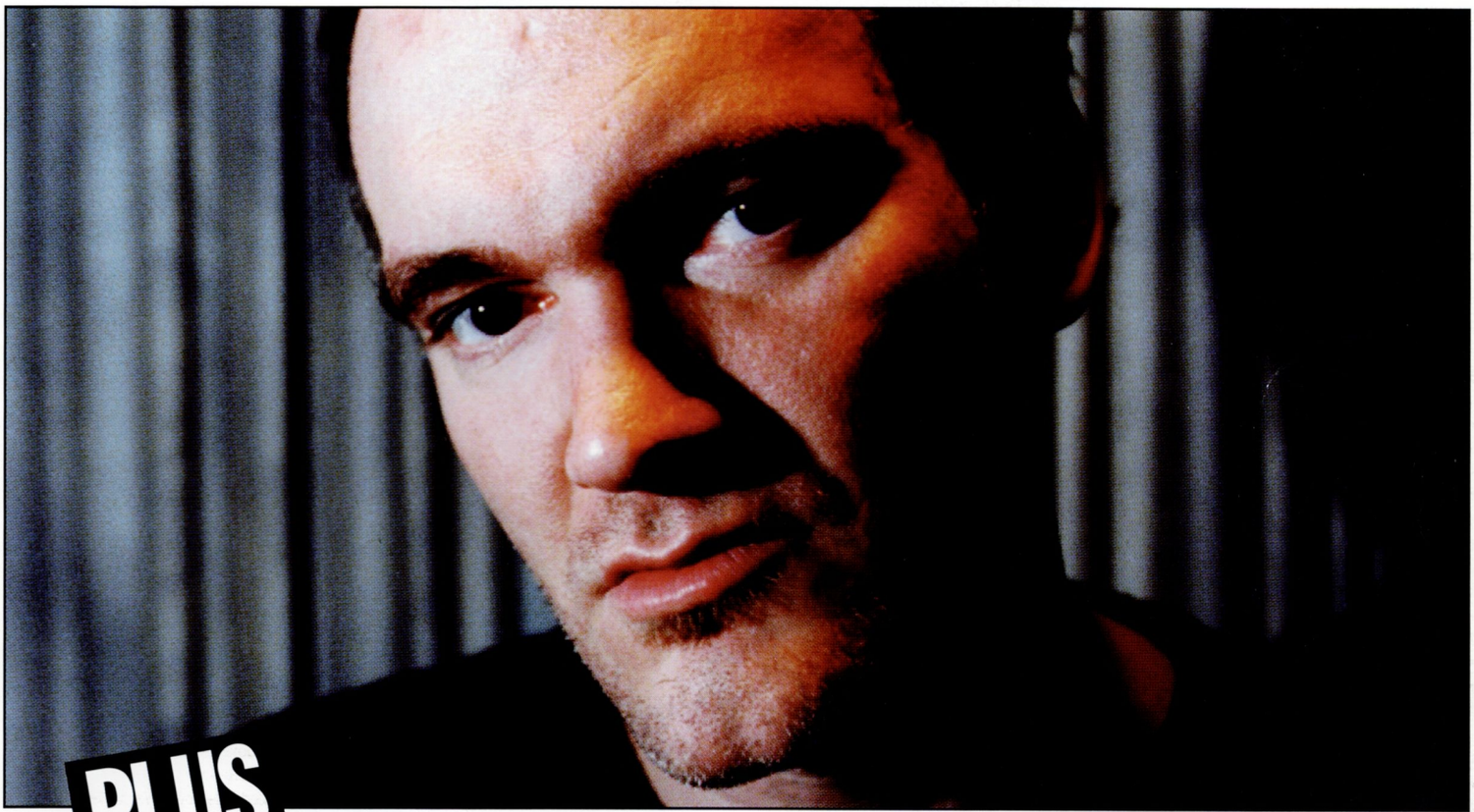
Ol' Reb gives me a squinty little look and I'm out of that room in a rush.

Allan Jones
Editor

Will it surprise anyone to learn that Wayne Nutt was never heard of again after Oil Field Man?

Next month in UNCUT

Tarantino



Adrian Boot

PLUS

FREE CD!

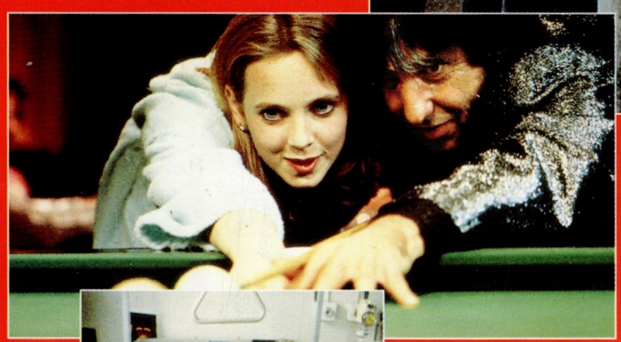
UNKNOWN PLEASURES

Classic acts. Classic tracks. Classic collection

On sale March 5

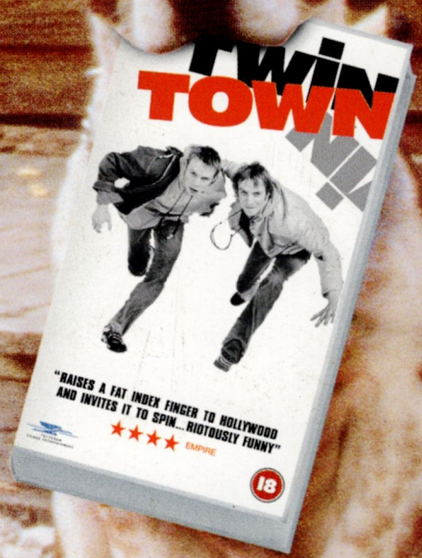
it's the mutt's nuts

SEX, DRUGS and the head of a **DEAD POODLE** collide with **JOY RIDING** in a film that has quickly established itself as a hilarious **CULT BLACK COMEDY.**



"TWIN TOWN does for **SWANSEA** what the RAF did for Dresden" **LOADED**

POLYGRAM FILMED ENTERTAINMENT



18

TWIN TOWN a trip you'll never forget

video on sale Feb 9